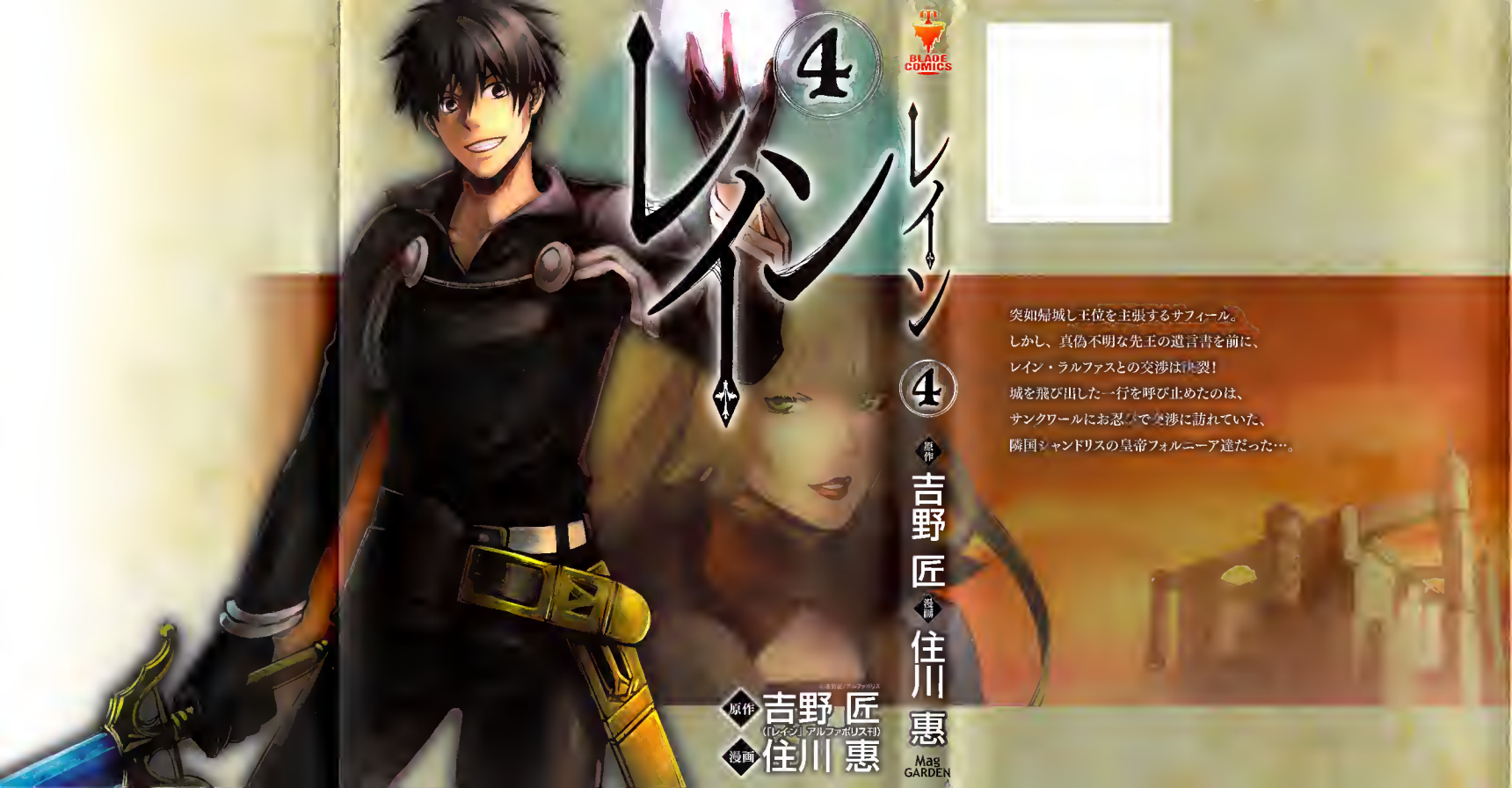

BLADE COMICS

レイン 4

突如帰城し王位を主張するサフィール。
しかし、真偽不明な先王の遺言書を前に、
レイン・ラルファスとの交渉は決裂！
城を飛び出した一行を呼び止めたのは、
サンクワールにお忍びで交渉に訪れていた、
隣国シャンドリスの皇帝フォルニーア達だった…。

原作 吉野匠
漫画 住川惠

Mag GARDEN

レント 4

THE FOOL

0

I

The Magician

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That unseemly and intimidating look...

CHAPTER 17
THE EMPRESS OF SHANDRIS

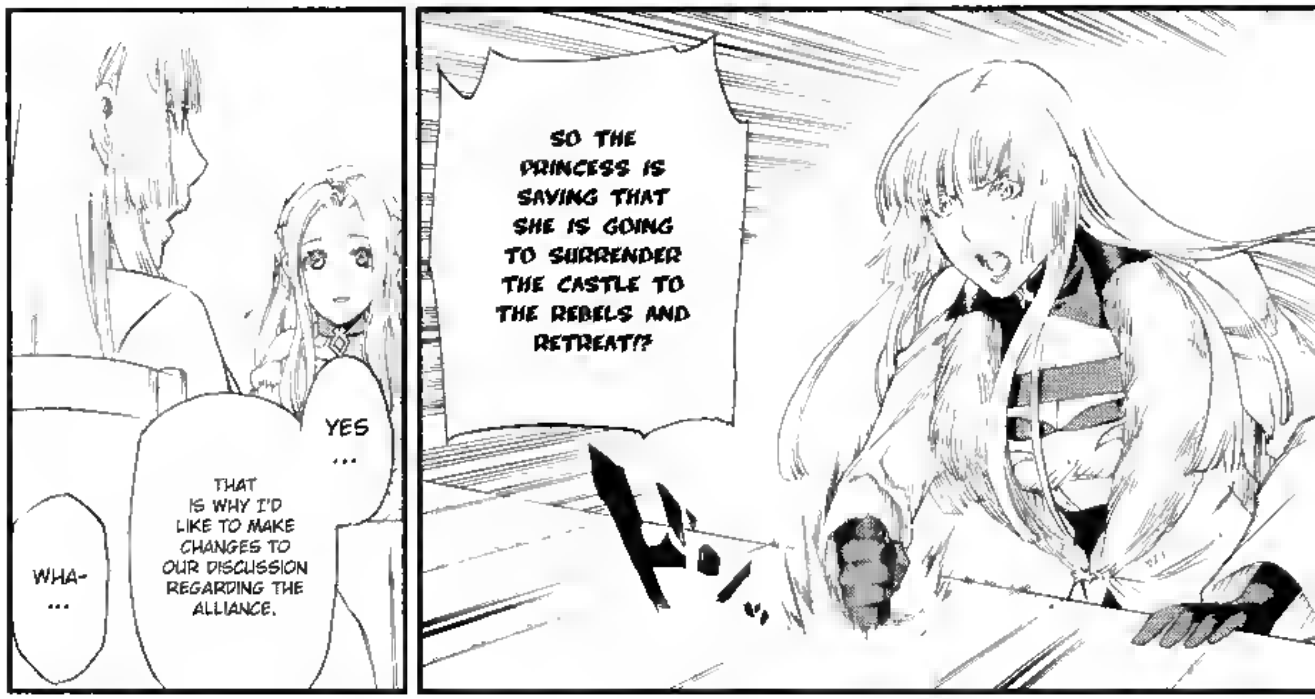
SOMEONE IS WATCHING US...
NO-THING ...
WHAT'S WRONG?
This presence ...

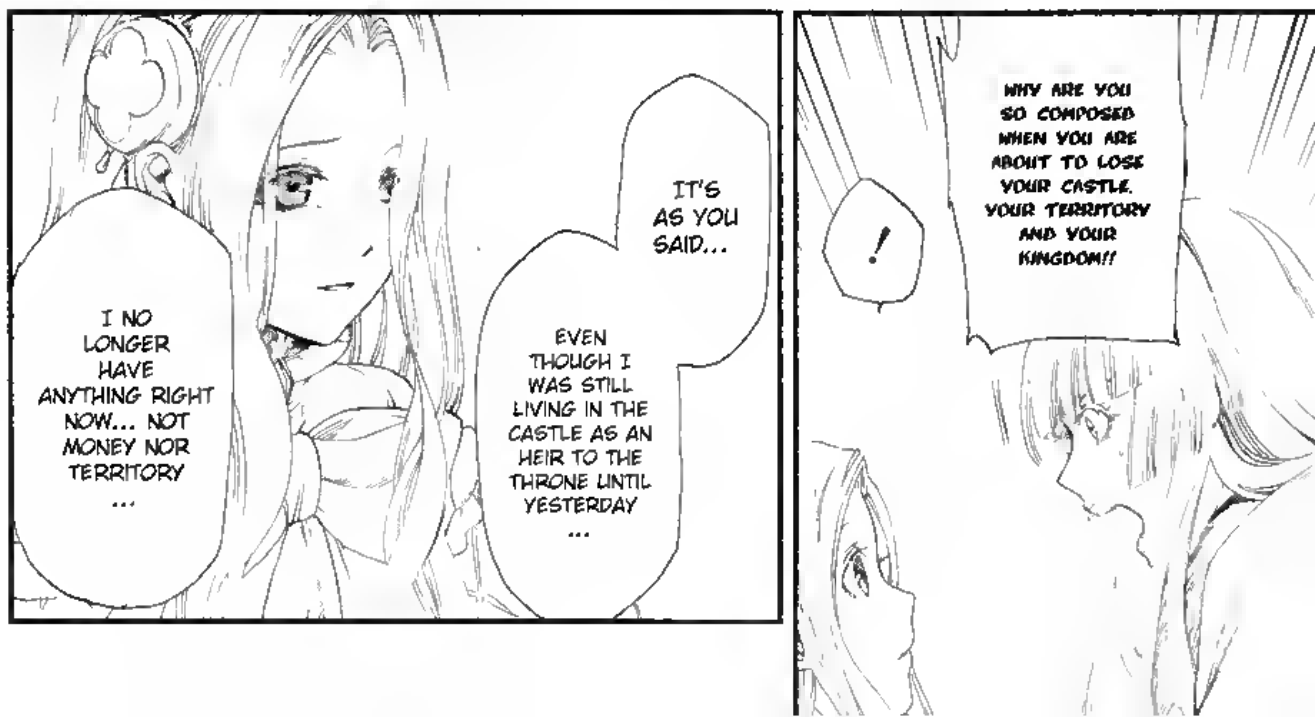
IT'S BEEN A WHILE ...
YOUNG MAN.
WAH!
WHAT IS IT, GENERAL?
WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY STOP...
I'M NO LONGER THAT YOUNG MAN YOU THOUGHT I WAS.
JOE RAMBERG.
JOE?
THEN HE'S...

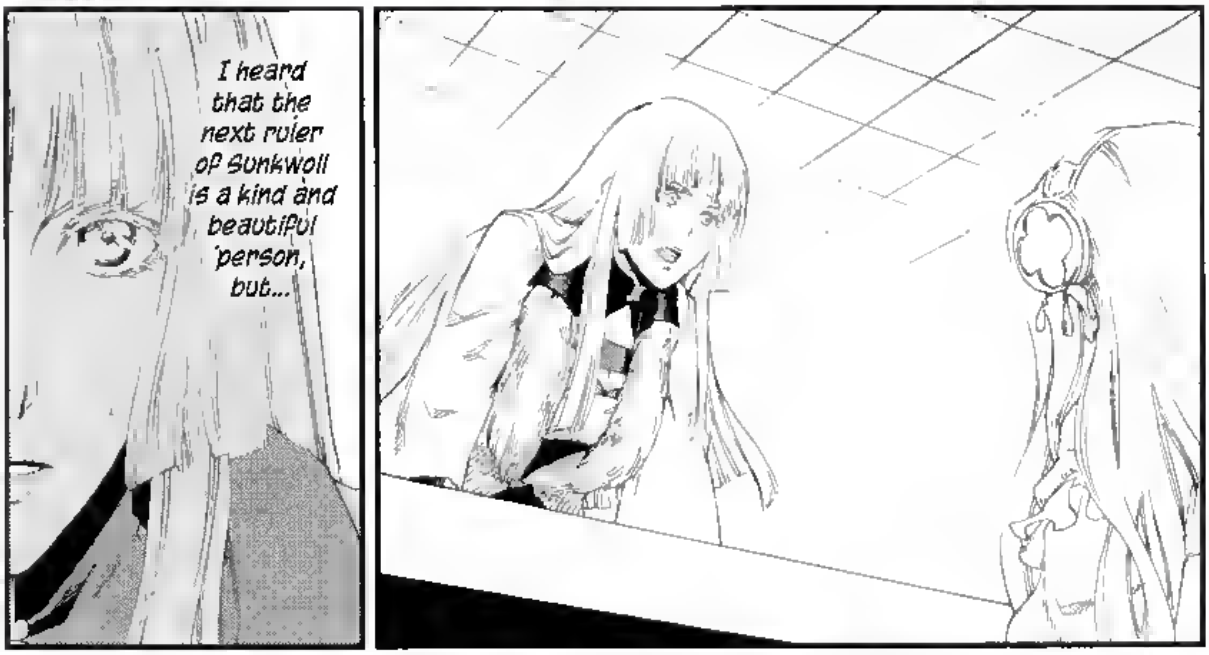
ISN'T HE THE RUMORED "INVINCIBLE DIVINE GENERAL" ...
JOE RAMBERG OF SHANDRIS!
HM?
ARE YOU RAIN?
.....
This presence... is the princess'?

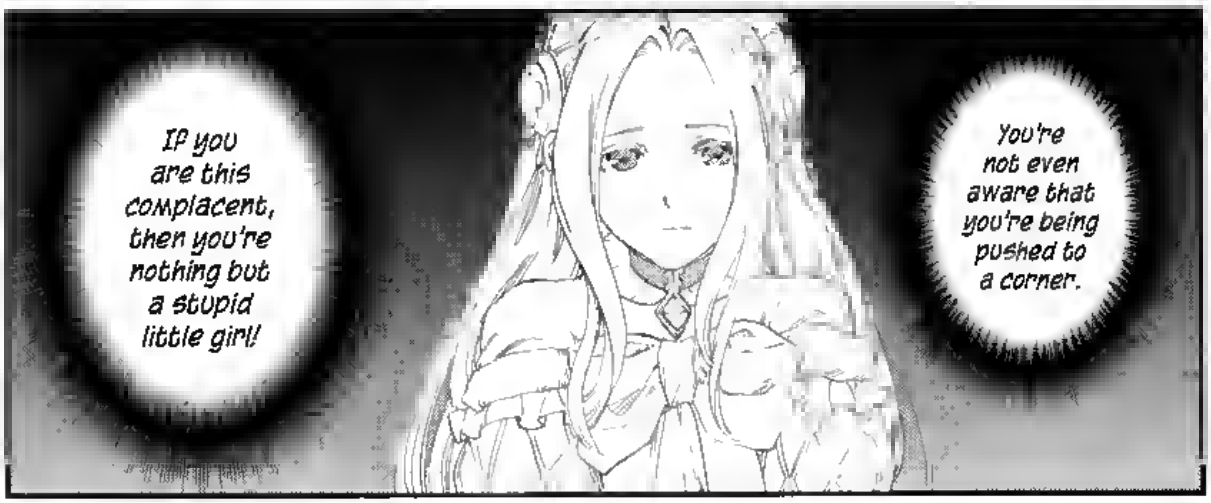
WHO ARE YOU?
"YOU"?
...
THE RUMORED 『UNKNOWN RUMORED SWORDSMAN』 GENIUS SWORDSMAN"
BUT YOU REALLY DON'T LOOK LIKE A 25-YEAR OLD.
NO MATTER HOW I LOOK AT YOU, YOU'RE AT LEAST 27 OR 28.
じぃ
じぃ
じぃ
I FORGOT TO INTRODUCE MYSELF
I AM FOLNIER LUCEEDA SHANDRIS.
AS THE NAME SAYS, I AM THE EMPRESS OF YOUR NEIGHBORING COUNTRY, SHANDRIS.
I APOLOGIZE FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR MARCH, BUT...
I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU.

ERM
...


WHA-
...
THAT IS WHY I'D LIKE TO MAKE CHANGES TO OUR DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ALLIANCE.
YES ...
SO THE PRINCESS IS SAYING THAT SHE IS GOING TO SURRENDER THE CASTLE TO THE REBELS AND RETREAT!?


I NO LONGER HAVE ANYTHING RIGHT NOW... NOT MONEY NOR TERRITORY ...
EVEN THOUGH I WAS STILL LIVING IN THE CASTLE AS AN HEIR TO THE THRONE UNTIL YESTERDAY ...
IT'S AS YOU SAID...
!
WHY ARE YOU SO COMPOSED WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO LOSE YOUR CASTLE, YOUR TERRITORY AND YOUR KINGDOM!!


I heard that the next ruler of Sunkwall is a kind and beautiful person, but...


If you are this complacent, then you're nothing but a stupid little girl!
You're not even aware that you're being pushed to a corner.

YOU GUYS SURE PUT UP A PROVOCATIVE ATMOSPHERE.
IF IT'S A FIGHT YOU WANT, I'LL TAKE YOU ON.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING THAT...

YOU SURE HAVEN'T CHANGED SINCE THE PAST 10 YEARS.
THIS TIME ROUND, I DEFINITELY WANT A BOUT WITH YOU.
VICTORY HAS ALREADY BEEN DECIDED, DON'T YOU THINK?

YOU HESITATED AND THUS I WON.
THAT'S A PITY.

IF YOU DECIDE TO CONSIDER THAT I LOST OUT OF FEAR..
I'M AFRAID THAT WOULD BE A MISUNDER-STANDING.
I THOUGHT THAT IF I WAITED, YOU WOULD GROW UP TO BECOME SOMEONE WHO WOULD BE MY MATCH.
THE REASON WHY MY FIGHTING SPIRIT WASN'T THAT STRONG 10 YEARS AGO WAS NOT DUE TO MY TIMIDITY. IT WAS BECAUSE OF EXPECTATIONS.

HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR..
GEN-ERAL!

AH!

TALK?

RAIN!!
JOE!?
!!

COZ ALL THESE UNNECESSARY RAMBLINGS WILL BE OVER IN A MOMENT.
SAY WHAT YOU WANT.
AS EXPECTED FROM THE MAN I CHOSE TO PUT MY HOPES IN...
HOW MANY DECADES HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU INFLICTED THIS WOUND ON ME...

THERE'S NO NEED TO.
I-I-I'M GOING TO ASSIST HIM ...
AS EXPECTED FROM THEM... I CAN'T EVEN DISCERN BETWEEN THE TWO.
I WONDER IF WE SHOULD EVACUATE THE CITIZENS.

Golden hair...
And this presence...
This strength and speed that are on the same level as me.
A silver, demonic sword.

YOU'RE NOT HUMAN, ARE YOU?
JOE.

YOU TOO, HAVE BEEN SEPARATED FROM HUMANITY, HAVEN'T YOU?
YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO SAY THAT.
HAHA.
THAT'S ...
RIGHT!!
!

ENOUGH!
BOTH OF YOU!!
!!?

THIS IS NOT LIKE YOU, JOE.
SILENCE! AS IF IT'S NORMAL FOR PEOPLE TO SUDDENLY FIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF TOWN FOR NO REASON!
YOUR HIGHNESS! THAT WAS TOO RECKLESS!
IF IT WERE SOMEONE ELSE, YOU WOULD'VE BEEN CUT INTO THREE!!
あ

HMPH.
THERE'S NO ONE WHO'S ABLE TO FIGHT ON PAR WITH YOU AFTER ALL.
WELL, IT CERTAINLY WAS AN IMPRESSIVE BATTLE.
MY APOLO-GIES.

BUT I CAN'T EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND YOU WITH JUST THAT.

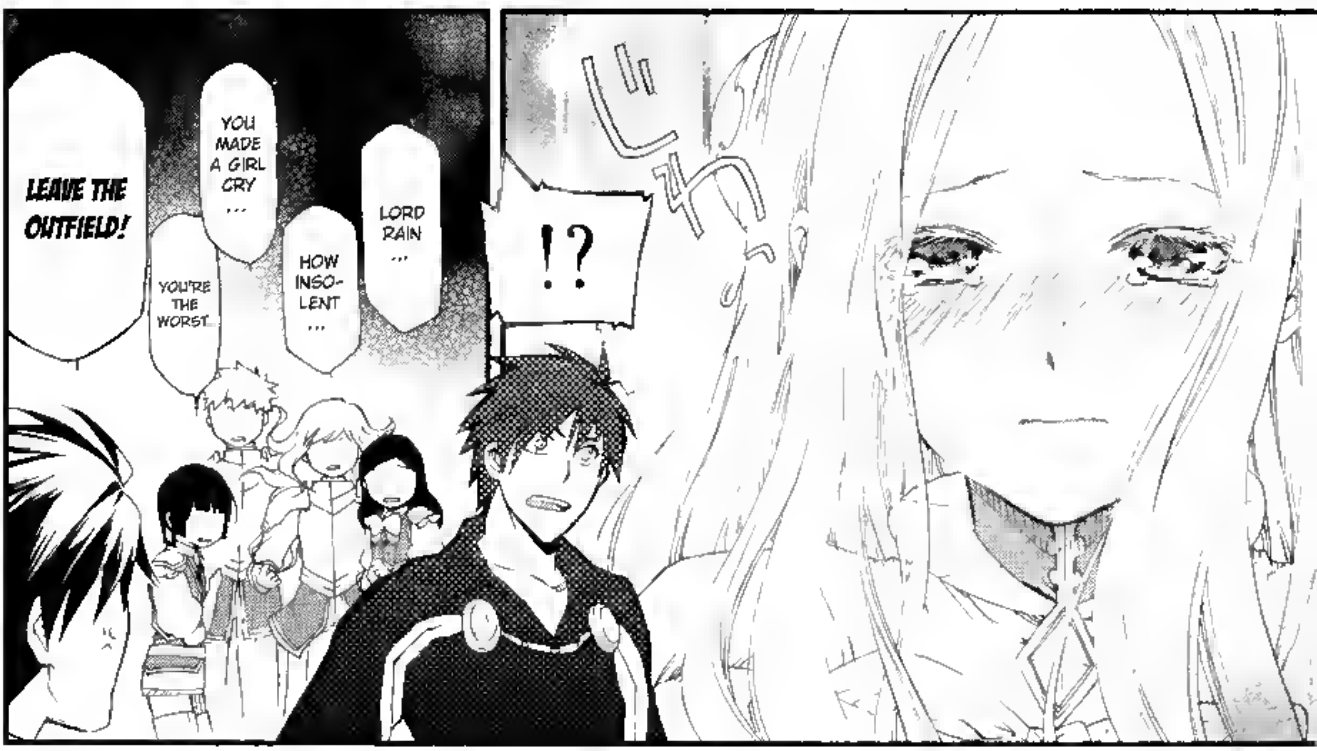
WELL I CAN'T DENY THE FACT THAT YOU SHOWED US AN IMPRESSIVE BATTLE!
HAHA HA!

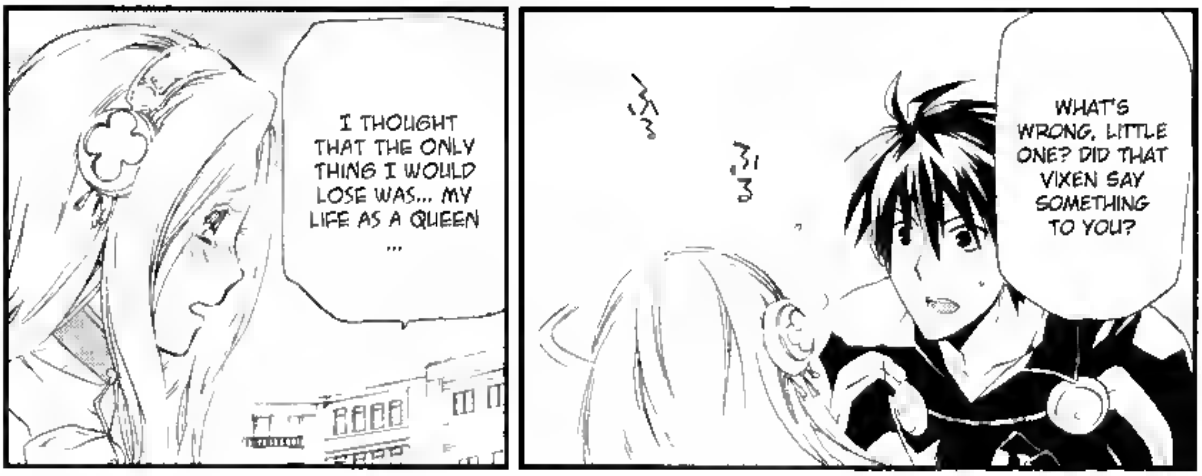
IF YOU HADN'T INTERFERED, THIS GUY WOULD HAVE BEEN COVERED IN BLOOD JUST ABOUT NOW AND GROVELING UNDER MY FEET WITH RESPECT.
"YOU"?
HEY, DO YOU HAVE HOLES IN YOUR EYES?

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE AN INVITATION, YOUR HIGHNESS?
WHY IS SOMEONE LIKE YOU SERVING SUCH A MASTER?

LET'S MEET AGAIN, RAIN!
I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU ANYTIME.
SHALL WE GO AS WELL?

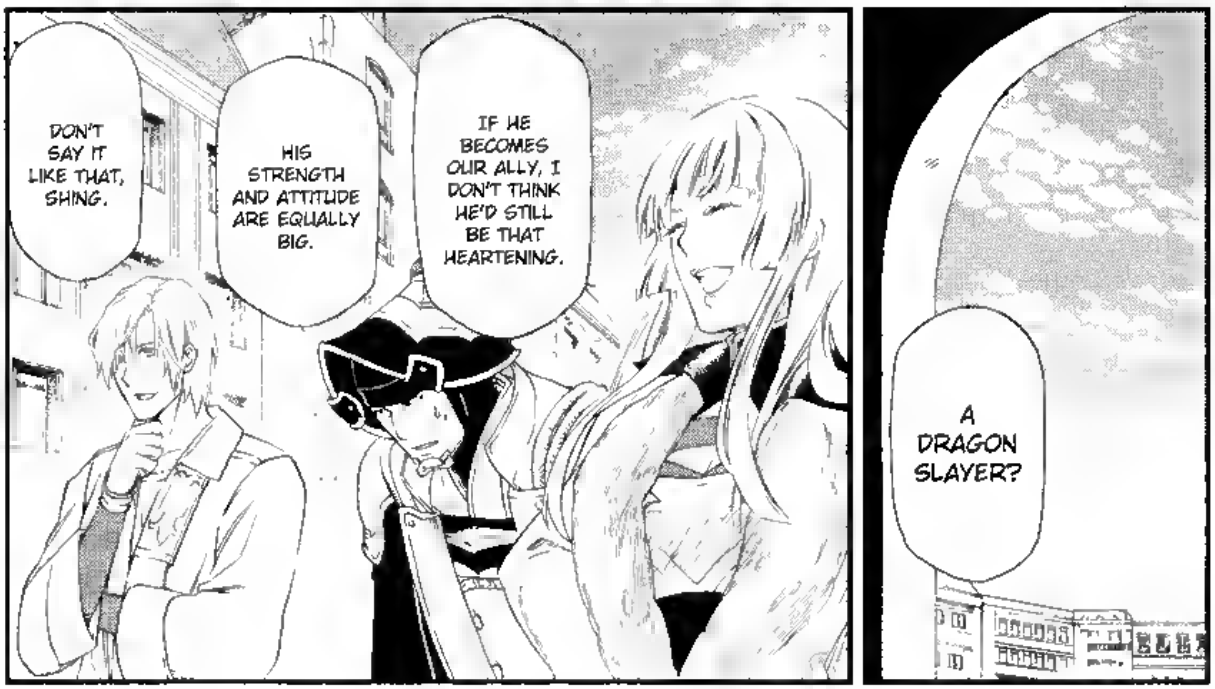
W-WHAT?
RAIN ...
ゴト


LEAVE THE OUTFIELD!
YOU'RE THE WORST.
YOU MADE A GIRL CRY ...
HOW INSO-LENT ...
LORD RAIN ...
!?

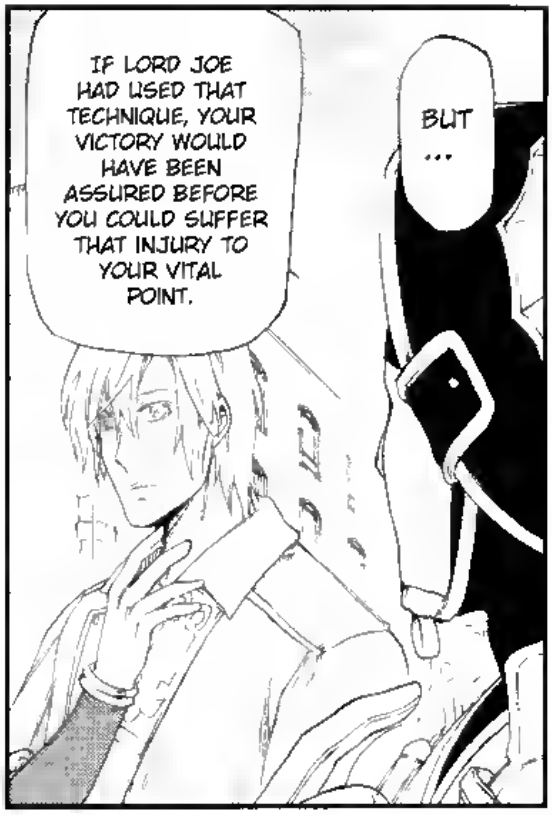

I THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY THING I WOULD LOSE WAS... MY LIFE AS A QUEEN ...
WHAT'S WRONG, LITTLE ONE? DID THAT VIXEN SAY SOMETHING TO YOU?

AH THAT! HEY, IT'S POINTLESS WORRYING ABOUT SUCH THINGS!
AT ANY RATE...
ALSO ...
I...
I CAN'T RETURN THE FAVOR... I DON'T HAVE.. ANYTHING... ANYMORE...
IT WAS JUST IN THE NAME OF THE NEXT SUPPOSED RULER.
EVEN IF YOU GOT EVERYONE ELSE TO COME ...
AH ...
JUST NOW ...
WHEN I SAW LADY FOLNIER... K-KISS YOU LIKE THAT... MY CHEST SUDDENLY HURT...
NO, THAT WAS ERR... WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT...
AH, THAT!
A GREETING NO, THAT'S NOT IT .
YES.

Is this really okay?
IF YOU'RE JEALOUS ABOUT IT, I'LL DO THAT FOR YOU SOONER OR LATER, SO...
GET A HOLD OF YOUR-SELF!
OKAY!
!
YOU'RE STILL TALKING ABOUT THAT?
YOU'RE THE WORST.
WOMAN-IZER.
HOW UN-ETHICAL
LORD RAIN ..


DON'T SAY IT LIKE THAT, SHING.
HIS STRENGTH AND ATTITUDE ARE EQUALLY BIG.
IF HE BECOMES OUR ALLY, I DON'T THINK HE'D STILL BE THAT HEARTENING.
A DRAGON SLAYER?

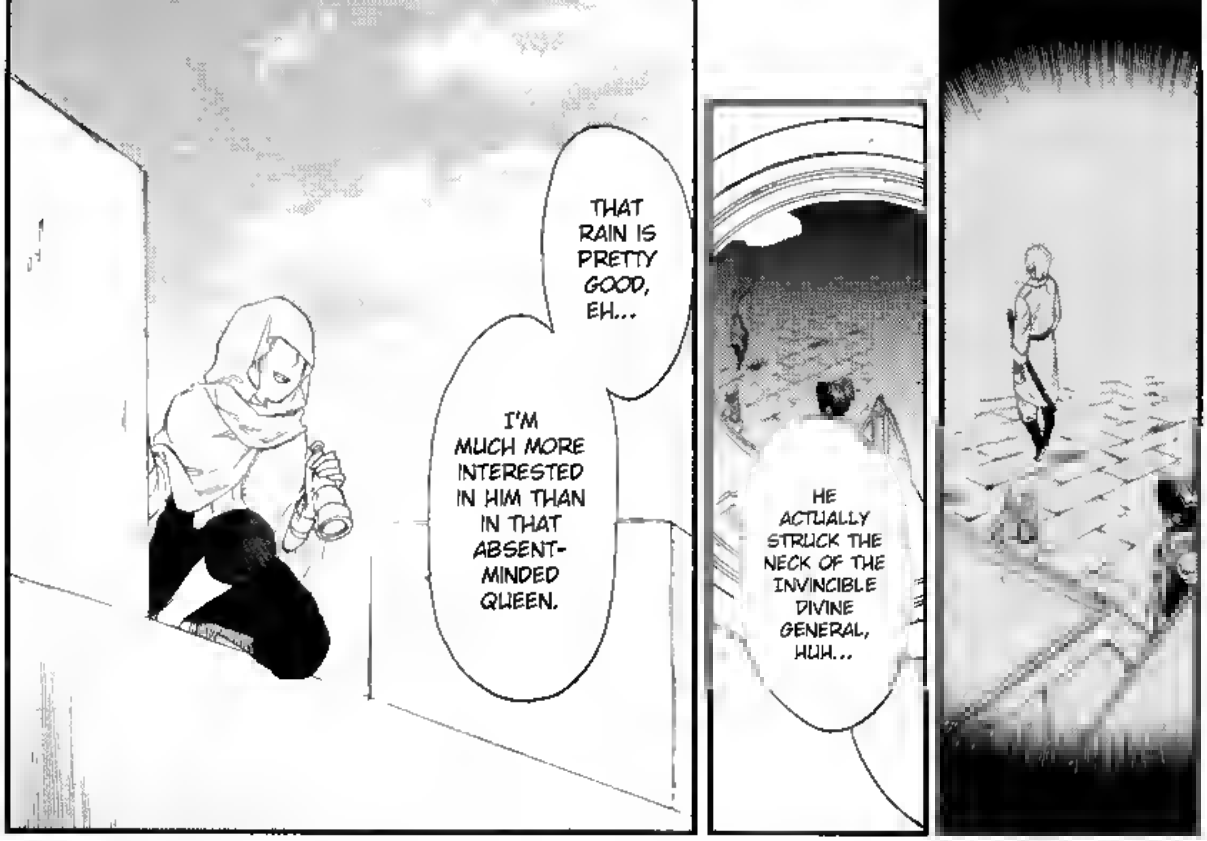
VITAL POINT?
フル


IF LORD JOE HAD USED THAT TECHNIQUE, YOUR VICTORY WOULD HAVE BEEN ASSURED BEFORE YOU COULD SUFFER THAT INJURY TO YOUR VITAL POINT.
BUT ...

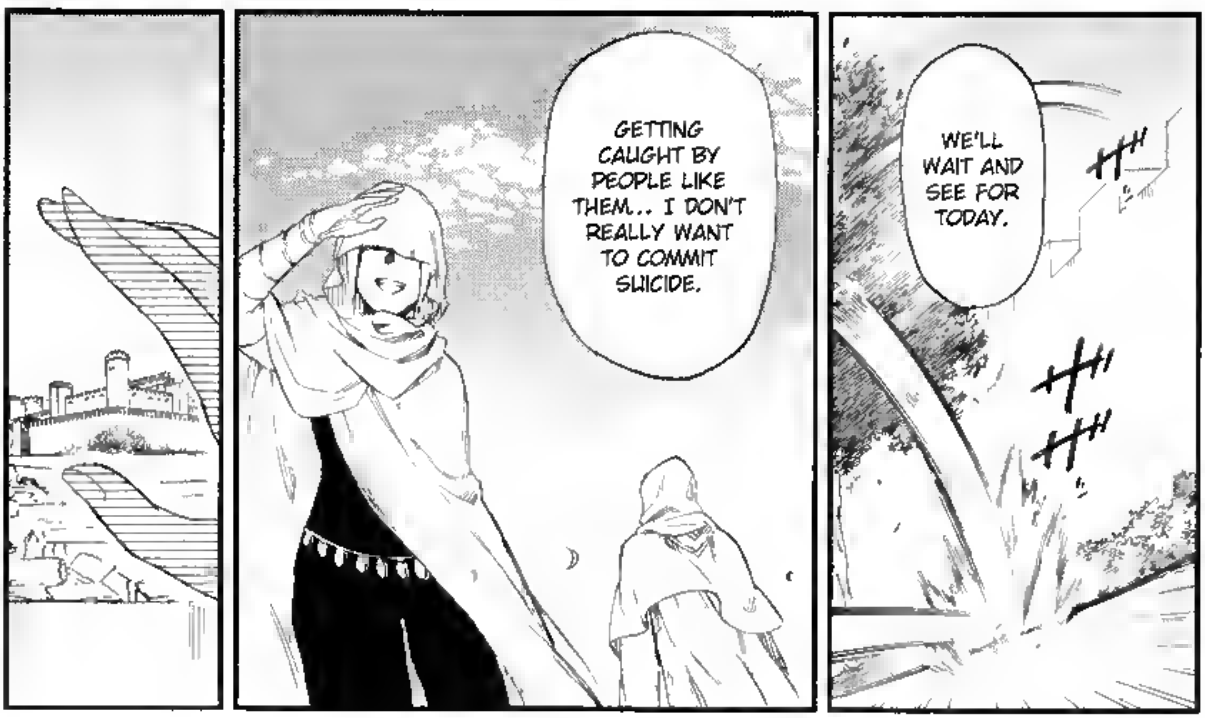
DON'T TELL ME, LORD JOE DIDN'T REALIZE THAT?

If you hadn't interfered, this guy would have been...

Hey, do you have holes in your eyes?


THAT RAIN IS PRETTY GOOD, EH...
I'M MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN HIM THAN IN THAT ABSENT-MINDED QUEEN.
HE ACTUALLY STRUCK THE NECK OF THE INVINCIBLE DIVINE GENERAL, HUH...

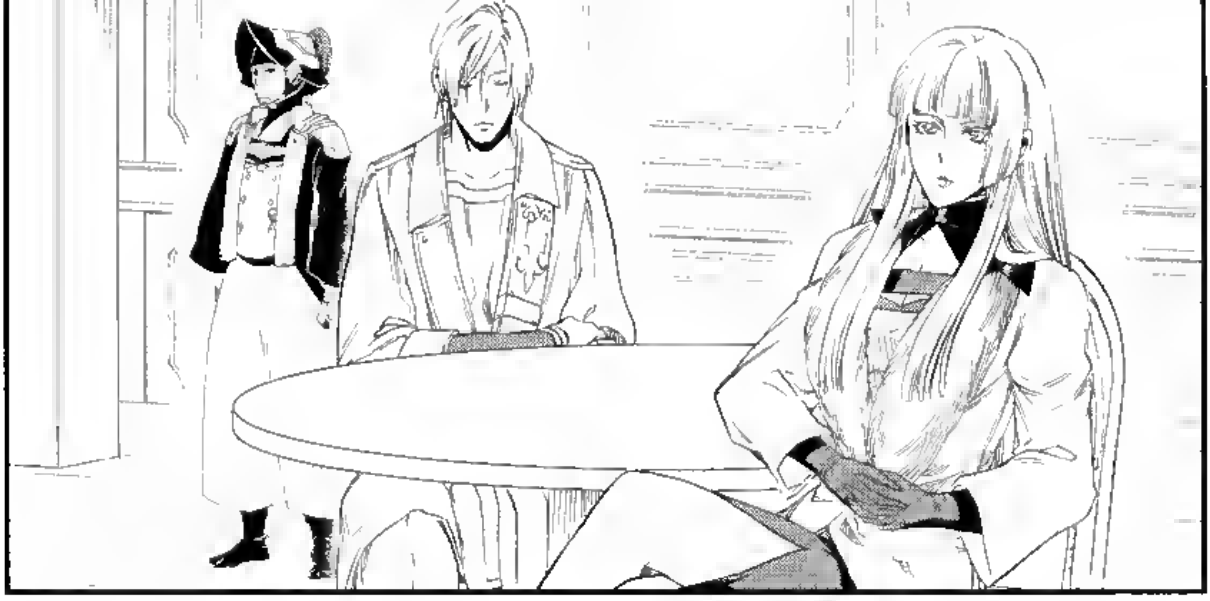
I KNOW, I KNOW!
IF THEY FOUND OUT THAT WE'D SLIPPED OFF...
PLEASE RETURN!
HAVEN'T YOU OBSERVED ENOUGH ALREADY?


GETTING CAUGHT BY PEOPLE LIKE THEM... I DON'T REALLY WANT TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
WE'LL WAIT AND SEE FOR TODAY.

GENERAL SAPHIR!

WHAT IS IT THEN?
THAT'S ...
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE AN AUDIENCE WITH YOUR MAJESTY...

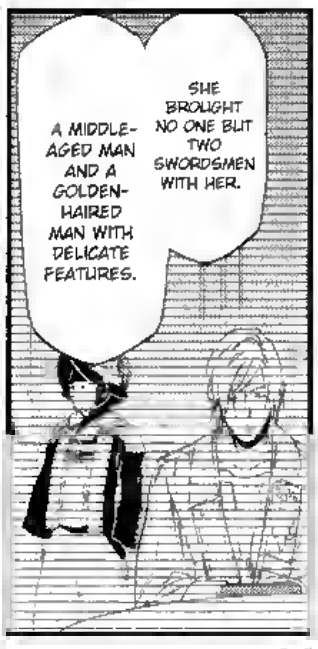
YOU DIDN'T CALL ME "YOUR MAJESTY"!!
I-I APOLOGIZE FOR THAT, YOUR MAJESTY!!



THE EMPRESS PERSONALLY ARRIVED WITHOUT HER TROOPS ...
IT SEEMS LIKE THEY ARE HERE TO NEGOTIATE AN ALLIANCE AGAINST THE MENACE OF ZARMIN.
WHAT?

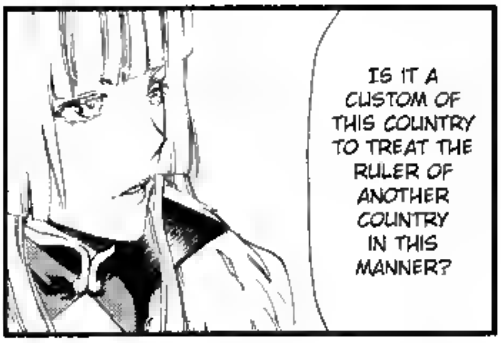
THE EMPRESS OF SHANDRIS!?
NO ONE TOLD ME ABOUT THIS!!

HOO ...
YOU'RE TOO CARELESS...


SHE BROUGHT NO ONE BUT TWO SWORDSMEN WITH HER.
A MIDDLE-AGED MAN AND A GOLDEN-HAIRED MAN WITH DELICATE FEATURES.

TREAT US WITH MORE RESPECT!

I SEE.
THAT SAPHIR ACTUALLY CONSIDERED CAPTURING ME AS HOSTAGE MORE VALUABLE THAN SECURING AN ALLIANCE, EH?
EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE BOTH COMMANDER-IN-CHIEFS, THEY ARE BOTH ON DIFFERENT LEVELS, HUH.
MY SENTI-MENTS EXACTLY.


IS IT A CUSTOM OF THIS COUNTRY TO TREAT THE RULER OF ANOTHER COUNTRY IN THIS MANNER?

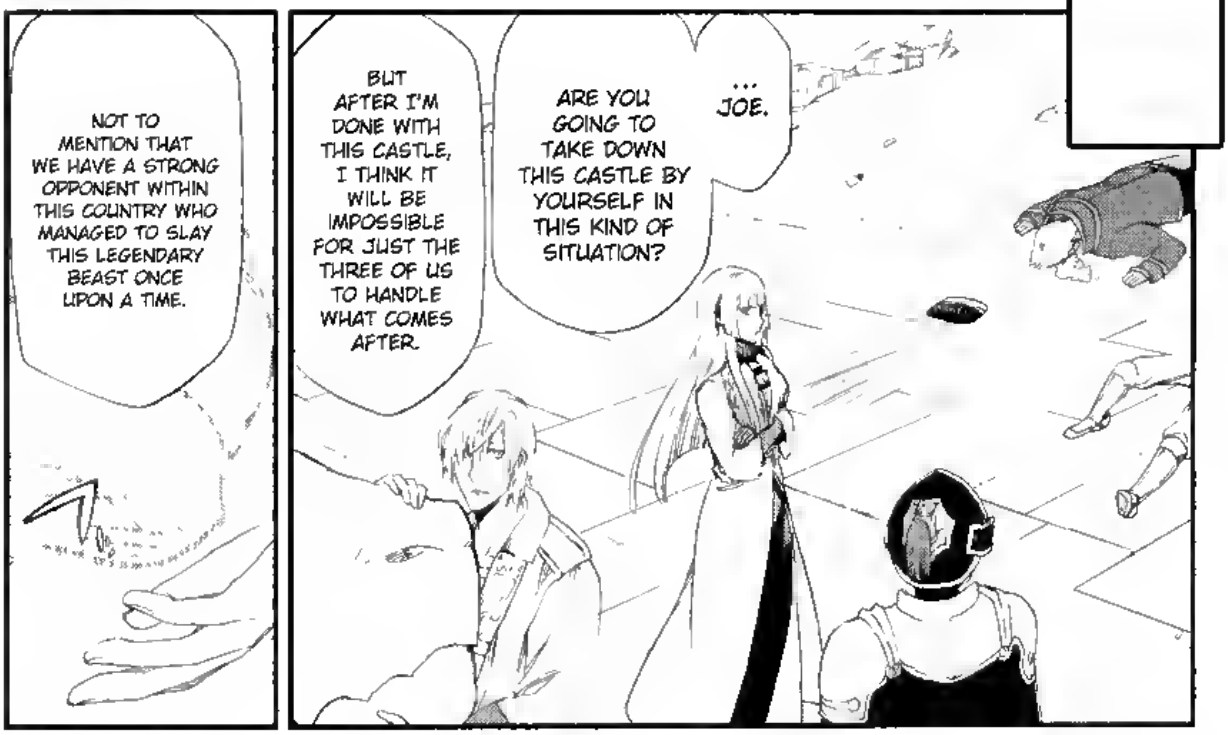
IT'S HIS MAJESTY'S ORDER.
PLEASE SURRENDER YOURSELVES QUIETLY.

EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT, DO YOU REALLY THINK WE WOULD COMPLY SO OBEDIENTLY?

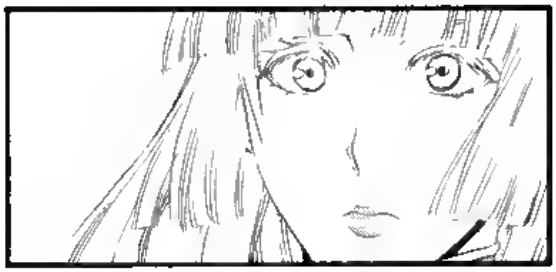
HOW TERRIBLE. OUR TRIP WAS A WASTE.
WE'LL BE HEADING BACK.

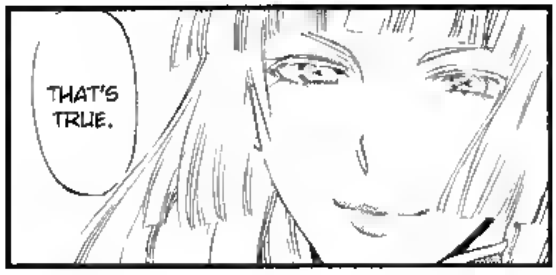
AA AH?
NO ONE IS SEEKING YOUR PERMISSION.
YOU SHOULD BE MORE CAREFUL IN THE WAY YOU SPEAK TO HER HIGHNESS.

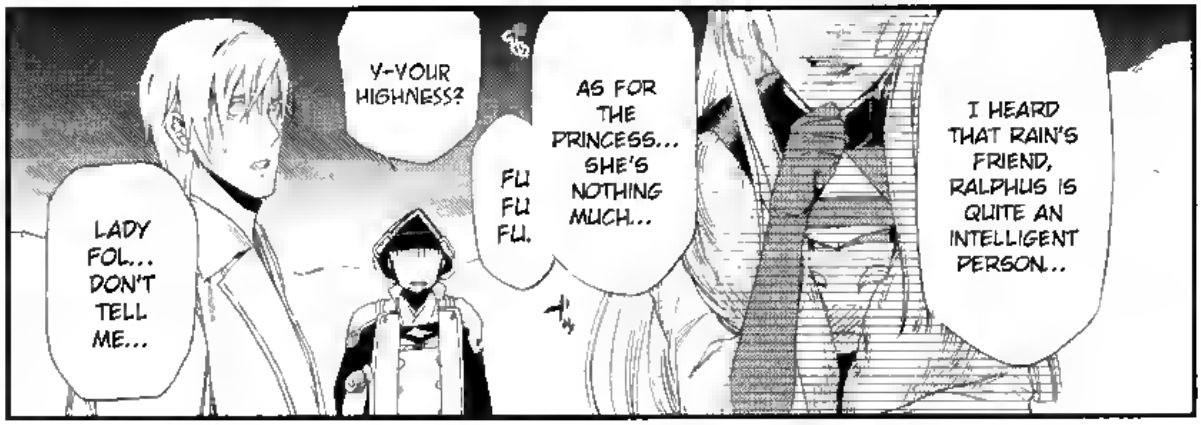
THAT MAN IS MAKING US SEE AN ILLUSION!
IT'S NOT A SUMMON!
IT JUST APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE, WITHOUT ANY MAGIC CIRCLES OR ANYTHING!
A-A MONSTER! DON'T BE DECEIVED!
Y-Y-YES!!
EH.
THEN WHY DON'T YOU CONFIRM IT YOURSELF?
IF IT'S REAL OR JUST AN ILLUSION.
IF THE FLAMES YOU ARE ABOUT TO RECEIVE BURN, THEN THAT WOULD BE YOUR REALITY.

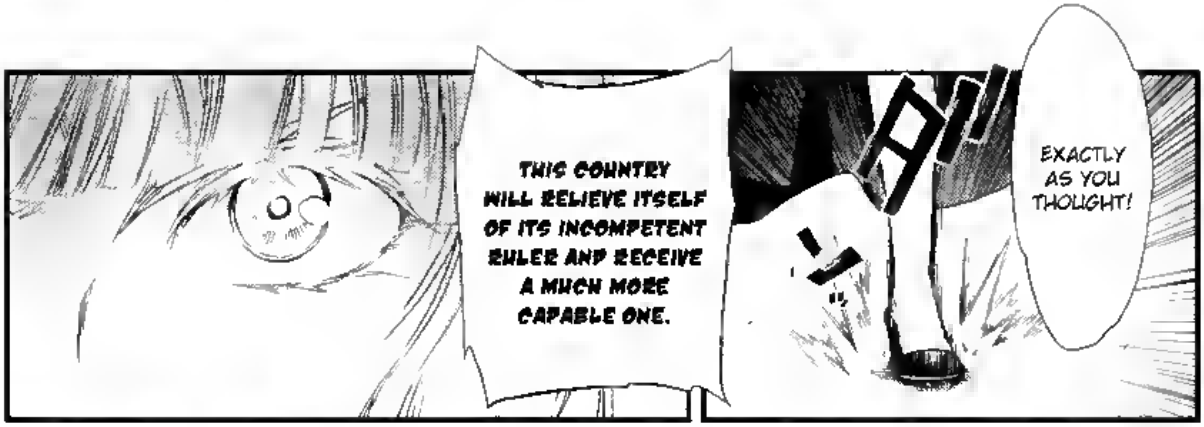

NOT TO MENTION THAT WE HAVE A STRONG OPPONENT WITHIN THIS COUNTRY WHO MANAGED TO SLAY THIS LEGENDARY BEAST ONCE UPON A TIME.
BUT AFTER I'M DONE WITH THIS CASTLE, I THINK IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR JUST THE THREE OF US TO HANDLE WHAT COMES AFTER.
ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE DOWN THIS CASTLE BY YOURSELF IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION?
... JOE.

WHAT!?
YE ...
WELL THEN, I SHALL RETURN FOR NOW AND COME BACK WITH AN ARMY.




THAT'S TRUE.


LADY FOL... DON'T TELL ME...
Y-YOUR HIGHNESS?
FU FU FU.
AS FOR THE PRINCESS... SHE'S NOTHING MUCH...
I HEARD THAT RAIN'S FRIEND, RALPHUS IS QUITE AN INTELLIGENT PERSON..


THIS COUNTRY WILL RELIEVE ITSELF OF ITS INCOMPETENT RULER AND RECEIVE A MUCH MORE CAPABLE ONE.
EXACTLY AS YOU THOUGHT!

WILL GLADLY ACCEPT THIS COUNTRY!!
SHANDRIS
...

RAIN

Sense Scans
www.sense-scans.com
#Sense@irc.irchighway.net

Raws : Sense-Scans
Translator : zkein
Proofreader : Frogmage
Cleaner : Jack of Hearts & Minty
Typesetter : li_er
Quality Checker : Revan

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Sense-Scans is Recruiting:
Translators & Quality Checkers

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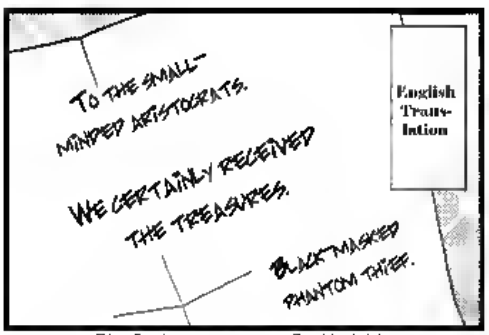
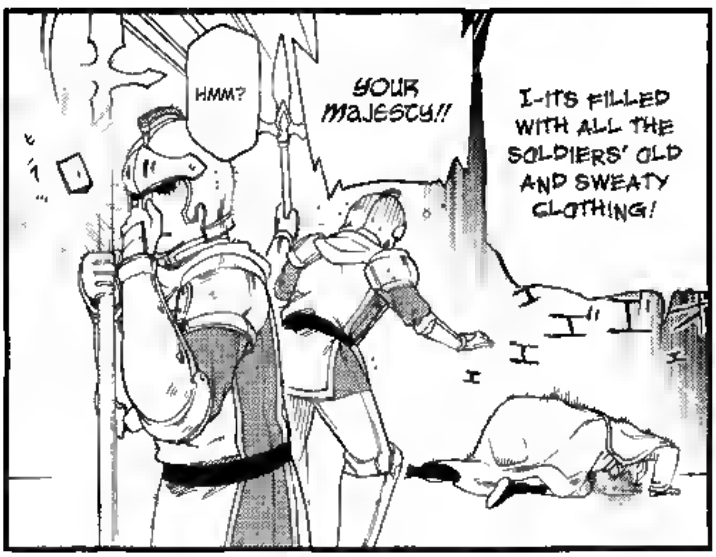
CHAPTER 18.
A TRANSIENT PEACE
NOT ONLY DID WE ALLOW THE PRINCESS TO ESCAPE, WE EVEN LET THE EMPRESS OF SHANDRIS ESCAPE.
SIGH... HOW INSULTING!
OPEN UP QUICKLY!
I'M JUST HERE TO CHECK ON MY PROPERTIES.
OF COURSE, AT ONCE!
YOUR MAJESTY!
IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?
Well, it doesn't matter. I have both the castle and the treasures after all.
These are all my...



TLN: *It actually says "Japanese Translation" but since we are translating it to English, might as well as put "English" =x*

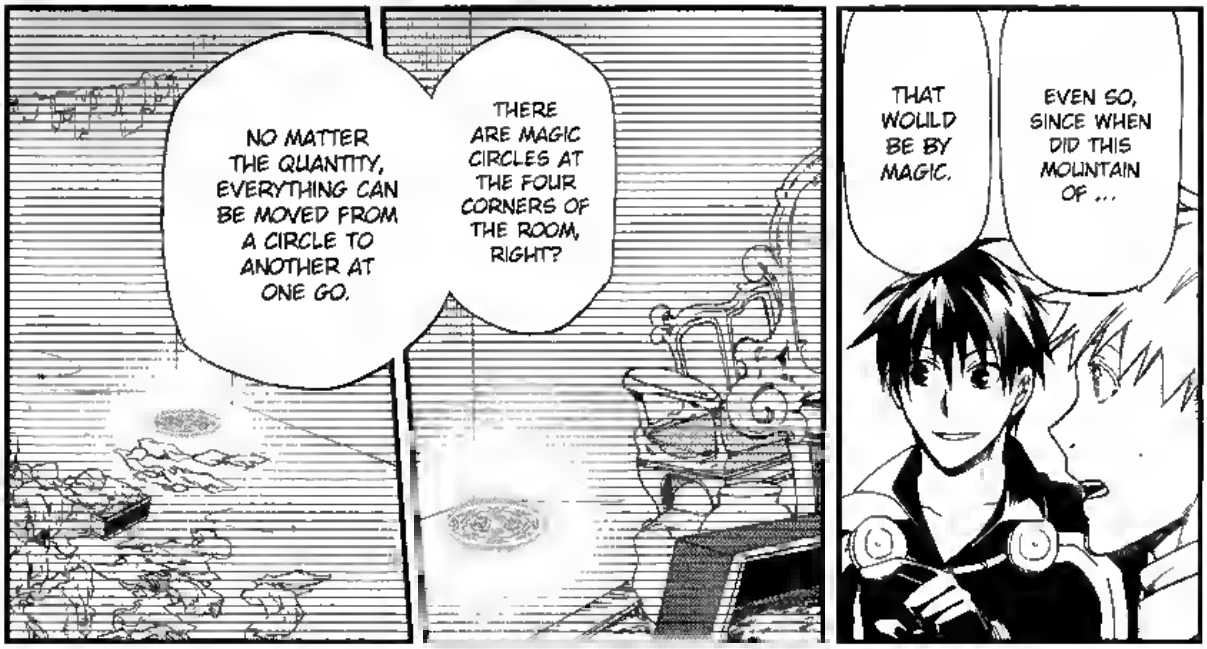


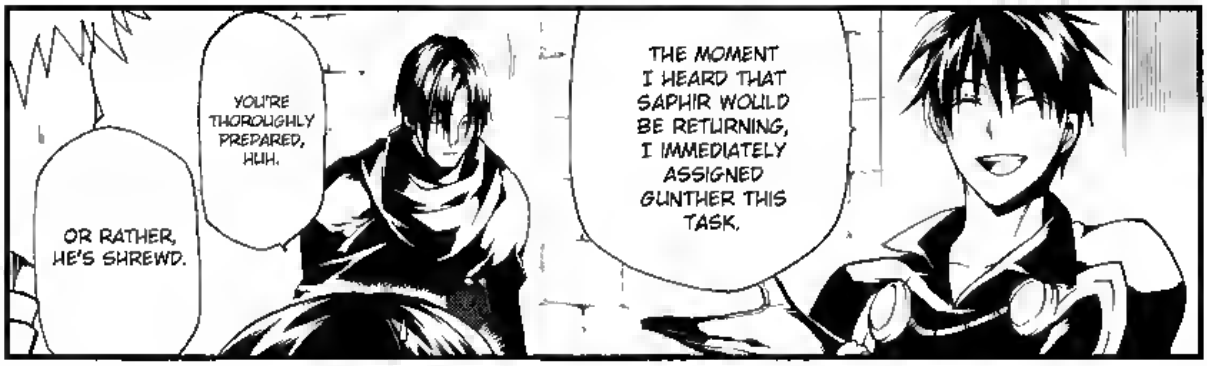
Raaainnn!!

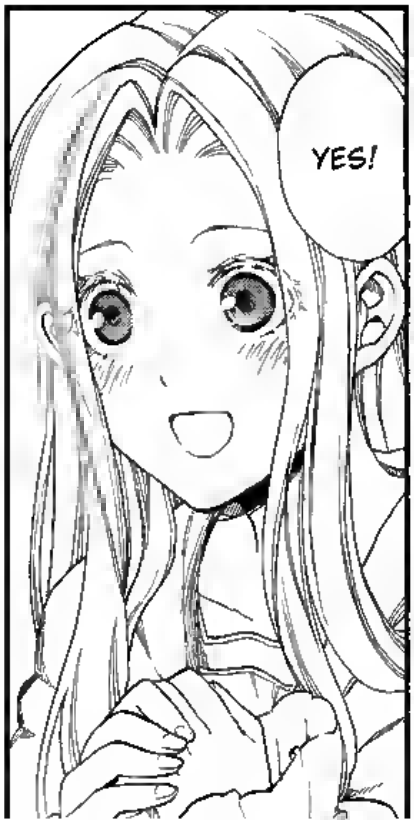
G
...

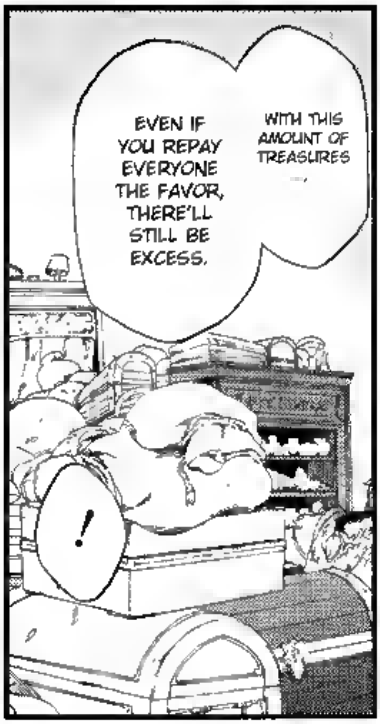
After adding all of them I'm going to divide them by 2
AND YOU... CONTROL YOURSELF!
THAT'S BECAUSE SHE'S REALLY POOR.
aah, SELPHIE IS VULNERABLE TO THINGS RELATED TO MONEY!!
A MOUNTAIN OF TREASURES OF ... GOLD AND SILVER ...

AREN'T THESE THE TREASURES FROM GALFORT?
SOMEHOW, THOSE LOOK FAMILIAR...
THAT WAS UN-EXPECTEDLY FRUGAL OF HIM.
WOW, TO ACTUALLY CARRY AND HIDE THEM AT THE SAME TIME...
I'M NOT COMMITTING ANY CRIMES, ALRIGHT?
DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT LOWLY OF ME?
DID YOU JUST HAPPEN TO EMBEZZLE OUR HOMELAND'S TREASURES?
GEN-ERAL ...?
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
IF I'D LEFT ALL THESE BACK THERE FOR SAPHIR TO SPLURGE, IT'LL BE THE END OF THE COUNTRY, WON'T IT?
I WAS MERELY CARRYING ALL THE PROPERTIES BACK TO THEIR RIGHTFUL OWNER!
BACK TO THE TRUE RULER OF OUR COUNTRY!
?
AND I ALSO MADE SURE TO HAVE LEFT HIM SOME SOUVENIRS.


NO MATTER THE QUANTITY, EVERYTHING CAN BE MOVED FROM A CIRCLE TO ANOTHER AT ONE GO.
THERE ARE MAGIC CIRCLES AT THE FOUR CORNERS OF THE ROOM, RIGHT?
THAT WOULD BE BY MAGIC.
EVEN SO, SINCE WHEN DID THIS MOUNTAIN OF ...

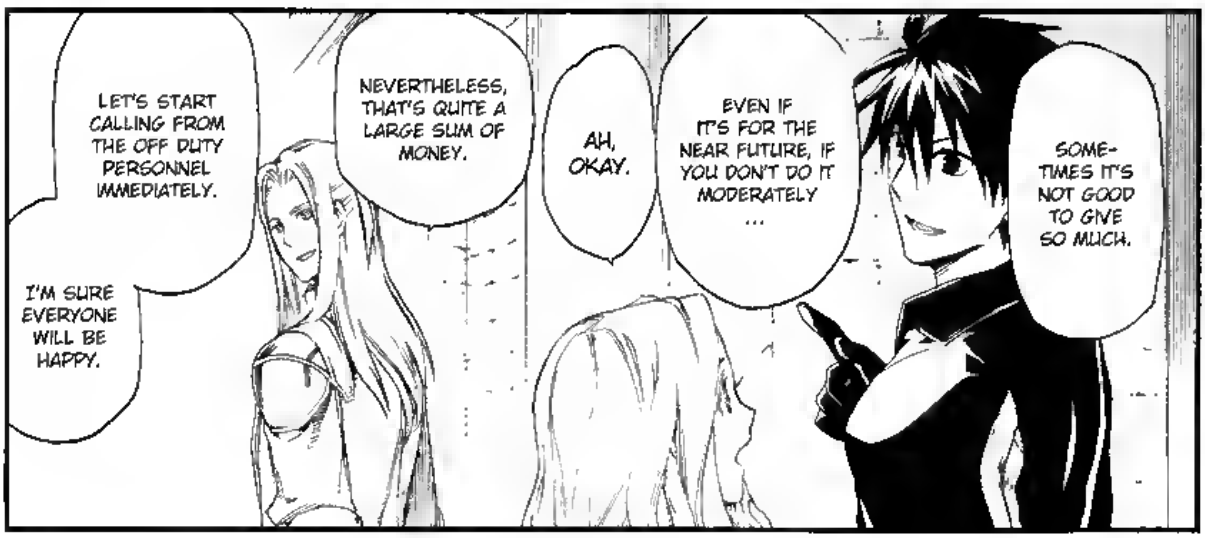

OR RATHER, HE'S SHREWD.
YOU'RE THOROUGHLY PREPARED, HUH.
THE MOMENT I HEARD THAT SAPHIR WOULD BE RETURNING, I IMMEDIATELY ASSIGNED GUNTHER THIS TASK.


YES!


EVEN IF YOU REPAY EVERYONE THE FAVOR, THERE'LL STILL BE EXCESS.
WITH THIS AMOUNT OF TREASURES ...
!

I TOLD NOT TO WORRY, DIDN'T I?
EH ...

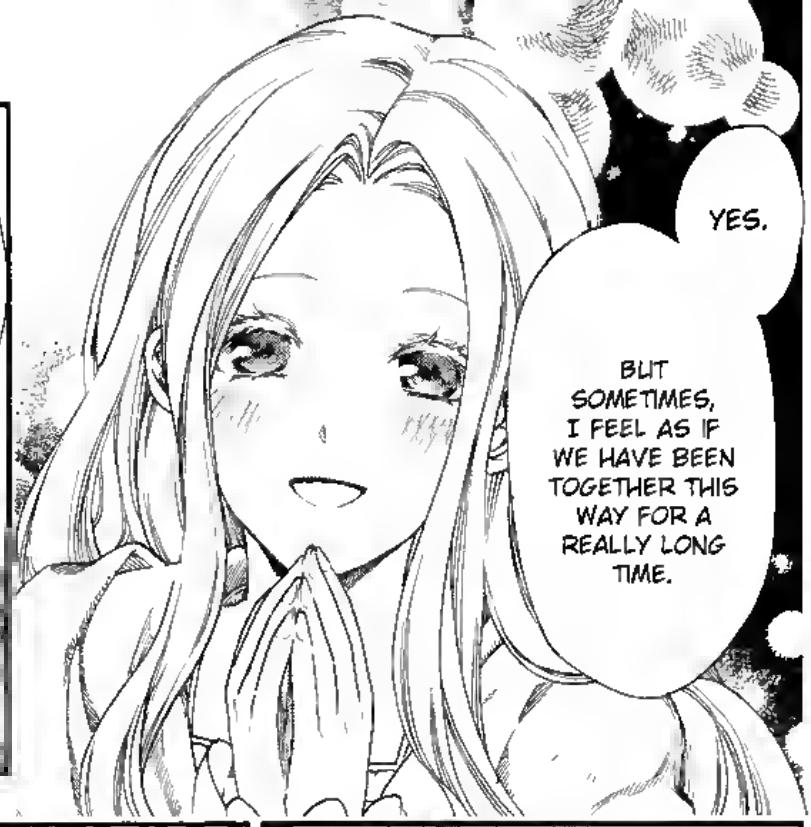
ERM.. EVERY-ONE.
IF EVERYTHING HERE IS MY POSSESSION ...
THEN I WOULD LIKE TO EQUALLY DISTRIBUTE ALL THESE TO EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU THAT IS HERE WITH ME TODAY.
ざわ
FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE SO FAR AND FOR WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
ALRIGHT!!
Y-YUURI!

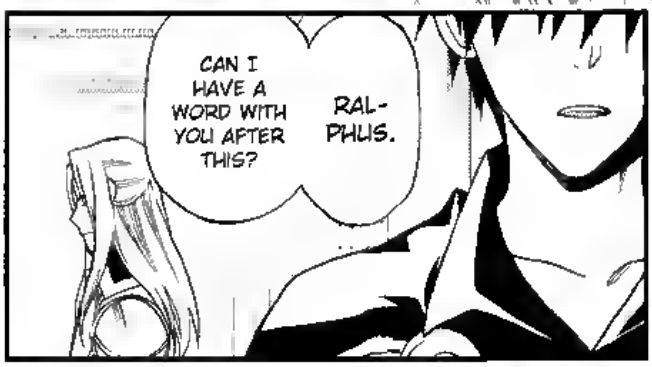

SOME-TIMES IT'S NOT GOOD TO GIVE SO MUCH.
EVEN IF IT'S FOR THE NEAR FUTURE, IF YOU DON'T DO IT MODERATELY ...
AH, OKAY.
NEVERTHELESS, THAT'S QUITE A LARGE SUM OF MONEY.
LET'S START CALLING FROM THE OFF DUTY PERSONNEL IMMEDIATELY.
I'M SURE EVERYONE WILL BE HAPPY.

LET'S TAKE DOWN THAT CURLY HAIR!
OF COURSE WE WILL!
THOSE OF YOU WHO'D GOTTEN IT ALREADY, HURRY UP AND RETURN TO YOUR POSTS! YOU'D ALL BETTER MAKE IT WORTH THESE REWARDS!
IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE.
FOR OUR PRINCESS!!
DON'T WORSHIP HER.

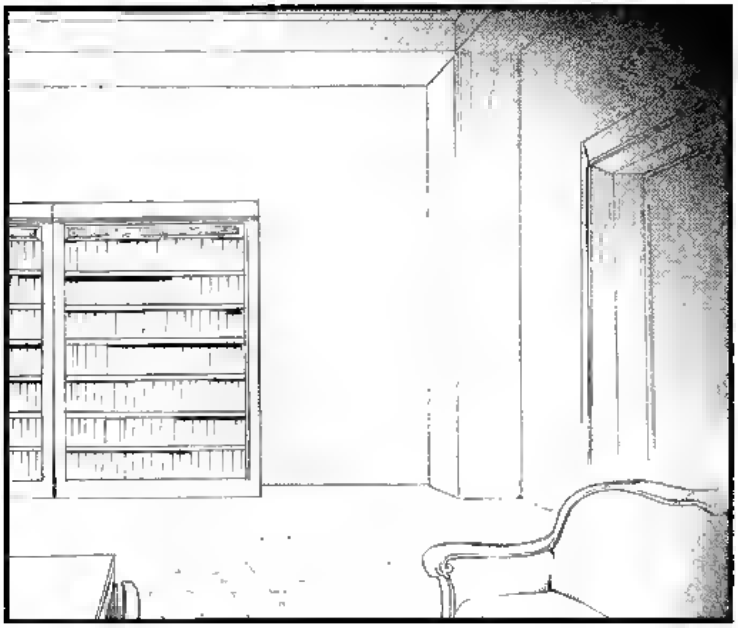
SURE.
THEN WOULD IT BE OKAY IF YOU GO OUT WITH ME A LITTLE FOR THE MORNING?
TOMORROW, I'LL BE SLACKING A LITTLE AS WELL.
THIS PLACE IS EXTRA BUSY TODAY SO DO TAKE IT EASY.
IT'S TIME FOR THE PRINCESS TO TAKE A REST AS WELL.
I'M ABOUT TO CONFISCATE ALL YOUR REWARDS.
Is this romance beneath the sun?
The beauty and the beast
AS THIS THE SPROUTING OF LOVE FROM TWO PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL STATUS
WITH THE PRIN-CESS!
GO OUT!
PLEASE LEAVE IT TO ME.
GAZARAM, PLEASE ESCORT HER.
REALLY?
I'M ALREADY USED TO RAIN ALWAYS BEING BY MY SIDE.
Fu Fu
IT'S ONLY BEEN AROUND 3 MORE MONTHS, YOU KNOW?
WELL THEN, I STILL HAVE SOME MINOR BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO FOR THE DAY.
SEE YOU TOMORROW.
Defending a Spiral Life

GOOD-NIGHT.
RAIN.

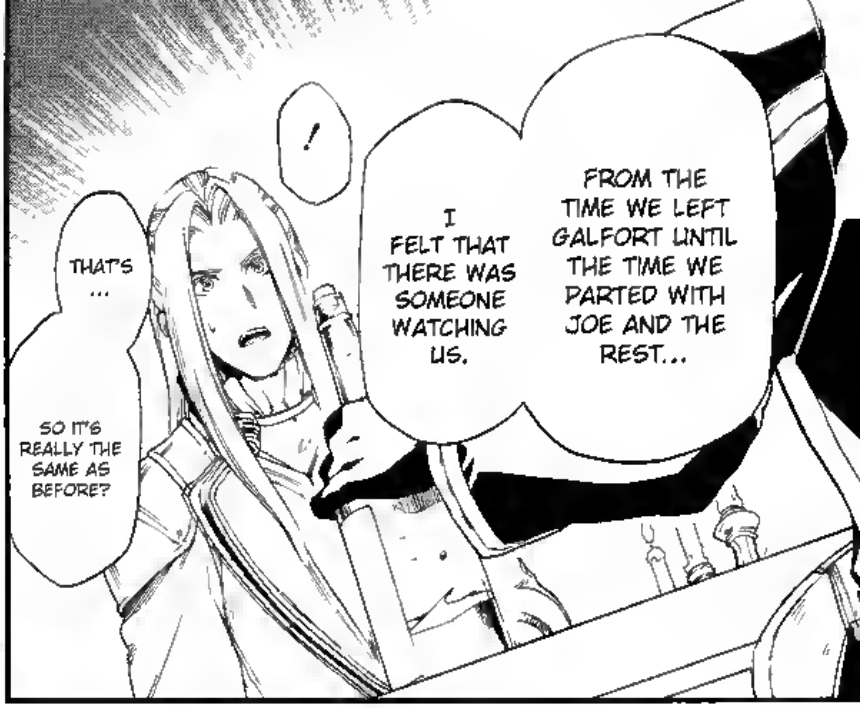

YES.
BUT SOMETIMES, I FEEL AS IF WE HAVE BEEN TOGETHER THIS WAY FOR A REALLY LONG TIME.

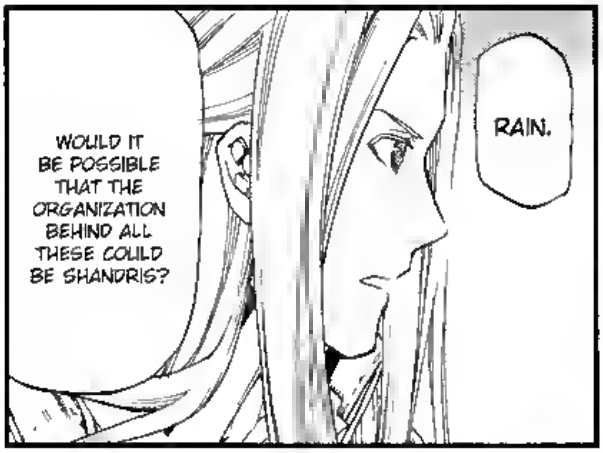

CAN I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU AFTER THIS?
RAL-PHUS.

SOMETHING YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO SAY IN FRONT OF HER MAJESTY?
I TOLD YOU THAT YOU COULD TAKE A BREAK JUST NOW, SO I'LL MAKE IT QUICK.



YEAH.
I'M POSITIVE IT'S AN ORGANIZATION THAT'S AFTER LITTLE ONE.


!
THAT'S ...
SO IT'S REALLY THE SAME AS BEFORE?
I FELT THAT THERE WAS SOMEONE WATCHING US.
FROM THE TIME WE LEFT GALFORT UNTIL THE TIME WE PARTED WITH JOE AND THE REST...


RAIN.
WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT THE ORGANIZATION BEHIND ALL THESE COULD BE SHANDRIS?

UNDER-STOOD.
THERE WASN'T ANY INTENTION TO KILL SO I'M SURE THEY WERE JUST SCOUTING AROUND, BUT I THOUGHT I SHOULD TELL YOU BEFOREHAND, JUST IN CASE.

NO, YOU CAN REST.
TOMORROW, I'LL BE SCOUTING THE SURROUNDINGS AS WELL, JUST IN CASE.
SO WE'RE STILL UNCLEAR AS TO WHOM THE ENEMY REALLY IS ...
NIGEL IS GOING TO GIVE ME THAT GLARE IF I TIRE YOU OUT.
THE GENERAL IS OVER-DOING IT AGAIN?

I UNDERSTAND YOUR DOUBTING OF OUR MOMENTARY RELATIONSHIP.
NO
NOT REALLY.
SHE DEFINITELY DID COME HERE PERSONALLY.
OR RATHER, SHE CAME FROM THE FRONT.
BUT DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT THE EMPRESS IS THE KIND OF PERSON TO SECRETLY SEND ASSASSINS AND SPIES AFTER US?

ALL RIGHT THEN... MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT'S WITH THAT DEPRESSING LOOK?
ANYTHING'S BOTHERING YOU?
EVEN WITHOUT YOU WORRYING, I'M GETTING PLENTY OF REST ALREADY.
COMPARED TO BEFORE, I'VE ALREADY INTENDED TO GO FOR THIS LONG RIDE FOR A CHANGE. IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY.
I WAS THINKING WHY HER MAJESTY WOULD BE TARGETED.
.....
IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE SAYING THAT THEIR MAIN TARGET IS NOT HEGEMONY, BUT THE PRINCESS HERSELF?
IF I COULD COME WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT, I DON'T BELIEVE THAT AN INTELLIGENT PERSON LIKE YOU WOULDN'T THINK OF THAT.
IF THEIR AIM WERE HEGEMONY, THEY WOULD JUST HAVE TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE OF THE PREVIOUS GENERATION LIKE SAPHIR, WHO ARE EASILY DECEIVED. AND AFTER THEY MAKE HIM KING, THEY CAN JUST CONTROL THE COUNTRY ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
UP UNTIL THE PREVIOUS GENERATION, I HEARD THAT WE EVEN HAD A REPUTATION FOR THE POOR PRINCIPLES OUR ARISTOCRATS HELD, AS VIEWED BY THE FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

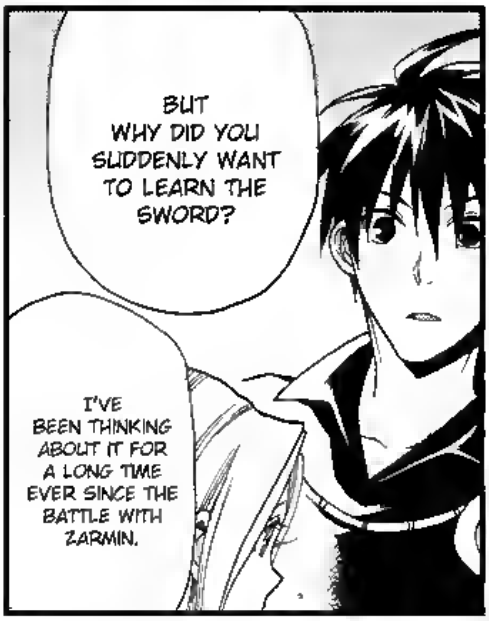
INDEED... IN ORDER TO KEEP LITTLE ONE FROM THE OTHERS, THEY HAD ALWAYS CONFINED HER TO THE CASTLE.
ALSO, WHEN I MET HER 3 YEARS AGO AND AGAIN RIGHT HERE AND NOW, THE PRESSURE THAT I FELT...
I FELT A STRONGER PRESSURE THAN BEFORE.
THERE IS A SECRET HIDDEN WITHIN THE PRINCESS.
BUT YOU KNOW, RALPHUS.
I ONLY HAVE ONE THING TO SAY.

NO MATTER WHAT WE'LL FIND AFTER THIS...
NO MATTER WHAT THAT CHILD IS ...
I WILL PROTECT HER TO THE VERY END.

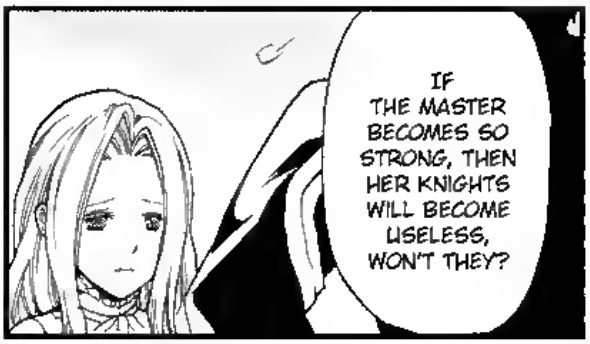
THAT'S WHY, INSTEAD OF "I", WOULD YOU MIND CORRECTING IT TO A "WE"?
IT'S JUST AS YOU SAID ...
RATHER THAN SPECULATING, WE SHOULD BE PREPARING FOR THE CRISIS AT HAND.
IF THERE IS ANY PARTICULAR REASON FOR HER BEING TARGETED THAT WAY, AS A KNIGHT, I THOUGHT THAT I WOULD NEED TO KNOW THAT REASON..
OKAY!
HM?
THAT'S ...

MY BAD, I'M LATE!

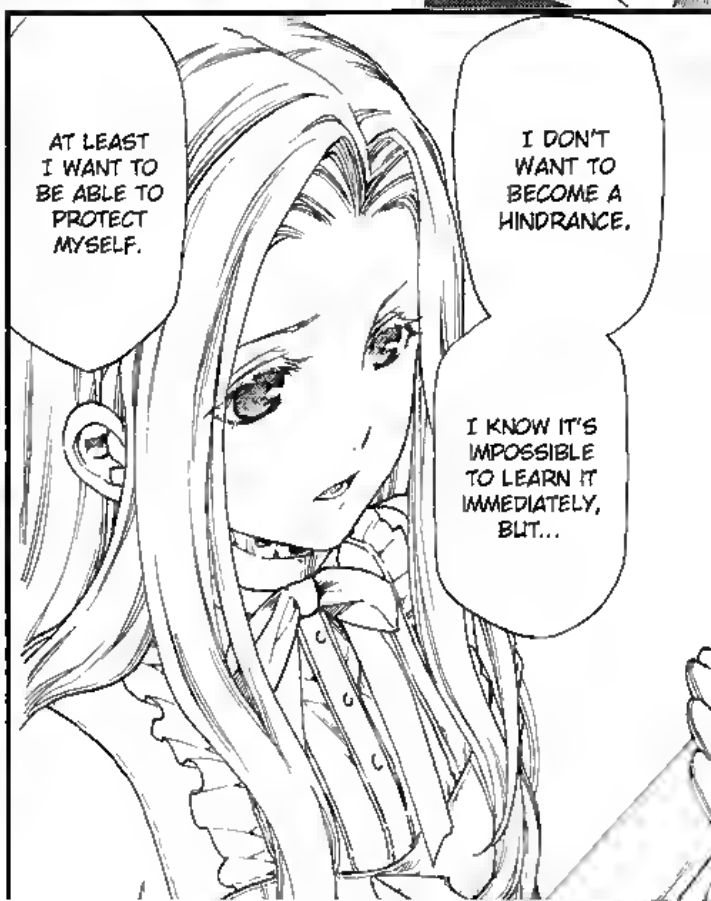
RAIN!
GOOD MORNING!

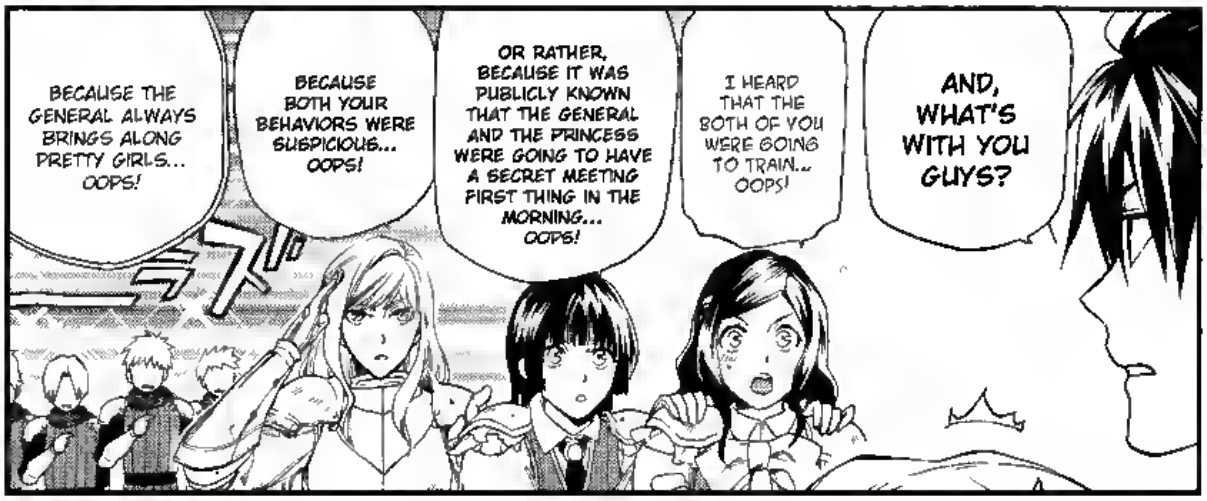

BUT WHY DID YOU SUDDENLY WANT TO LEARN THE SWORD?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT IT FOR A LONG TIME EVER SINCE THE BATTLE WITH ZARMIN.

GAZARAM, THANKS FOR ESCORTING HER.
NO PROBLEM AT ALL

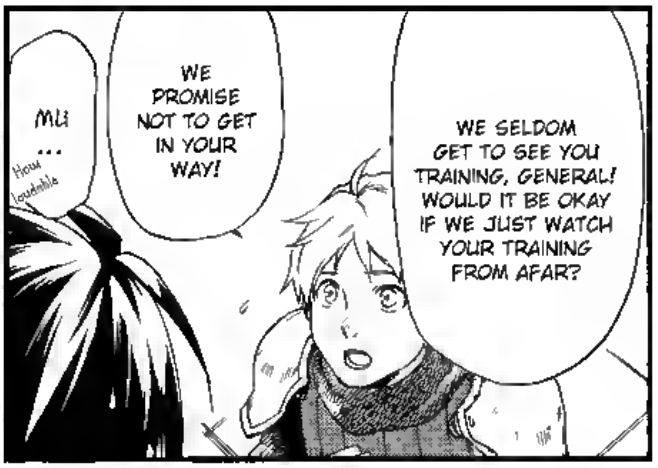

IF THE MASTER BECOMES SO STRONG, THEN HER KNIGHTS WILL BECOME USELESS, WON'T THEY?

THAT'S WHY WE'LL DO IT SLOWLY ALRIGHT?


AT LEAST I WANT TO BE ABLE TO PROTECT MYSELF.
I DON'T WANT TO BECOME A HINDRANCE.
I KNOW IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LEARN IT IMMEDIATELY, BUT...


AND, WHAT'S WITH YOU GUYS?
I HEARD THAT THE BOTH OF YOU WERE GOING TO TRAIN... OOPS!
OR RATHER, BECAUSE IT WAS PUBLICLY KNOWN THAT THE GENERAL AND THE PRINCESS WERE GOING TO HAVE A SECRET MEETING FIRST THING IN THE MORNING... OOPS!
BECAUSE BOTH YOUR BEHAVIORS WERE SUSPICIOUS... OOPS!
BECAUSE THE GENERAL ALWAYS BRINGS ALONG PRETTY GIRLS... OOPS!

PRIN-CESS, DO YOU MIND?
I FEEL A LITTLE NERVOUS, BUT...

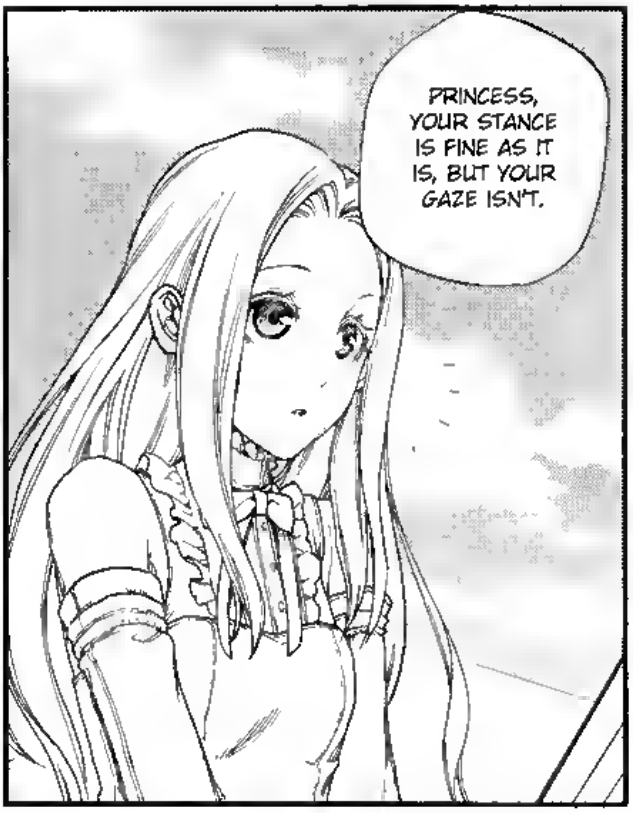

WE SELDOM GET TO SEE YOU TRAINING, GENERAL! WOULD IT BE OKAY IF WE JUST WATCH YOUR TRAINING FROM AFAR?
Mu ... How laudable
WE PROMISE NOT TO GET IN YOUR WAY!

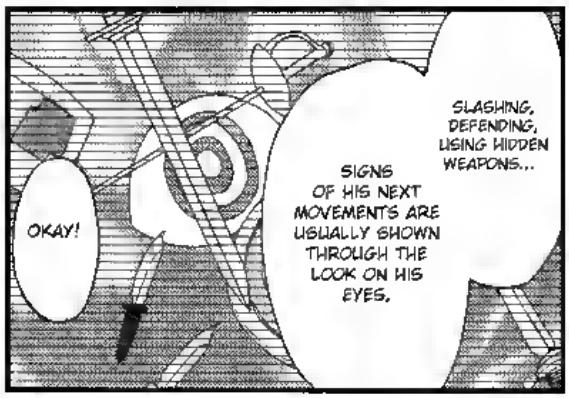
I-I WILL TRY MY BEST!

GET READY THEN!

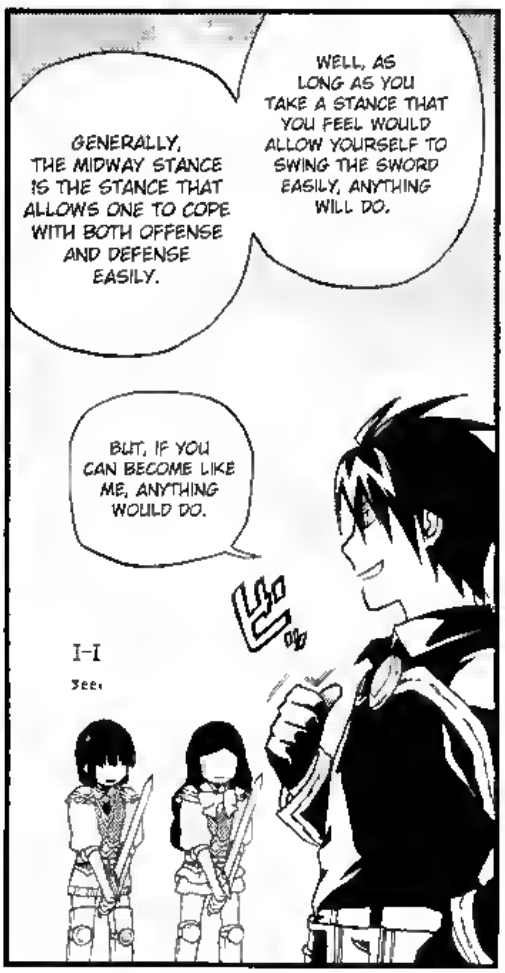
Y-YES...
SENOA ...
SHE TRIES TO BECOME LIKE ME, BUT SHE'S A HUNDRED YEARS TOO EARLY TO TRY TAKING UP SUCH A HIGH STANCE.
URGH.
YOU ARE STRAINING SO MUCH THAT YOU LOOK LIKE YOU CAN'T DO IT.
YUURI, DON'T BE LAZY.
TAKING UP A MIDWAY STANCE IS BASIC KNOWLEDGE, ISN'T IT?
...YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PLAYING TRUANT ON YOUR TRAINING DAYS, HAVE YOU?
O-OF COURSE NOT!!

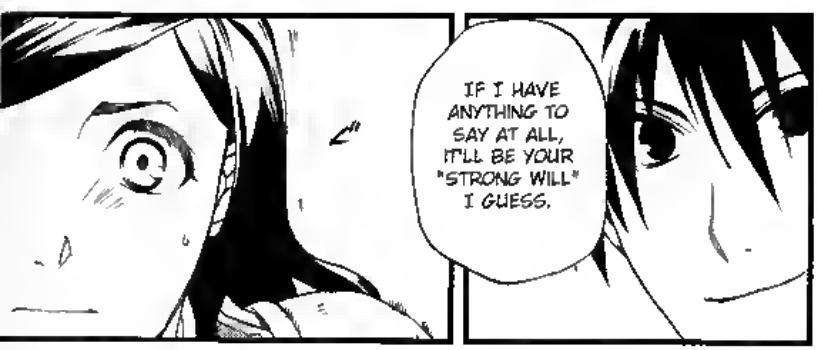
IT'S NEITHER ABOUT YOUR BLADE NOR YOUR OPPONENT'S BLADE. YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT YOUR OPPONENT IN THE EYE.


PRINCESS, YOUR STANCE IS FINE AS IT IS, BUT YOUR GAZE ISN'T.


OKAY!
SIGNS OF HIS NEXT MOVEMENTS ARE USUALLY SHOWN THROUGH THE LOOK ON HIS EYES.
SLASHING, DEFENDING, USING HIDDEN WEAPONS...

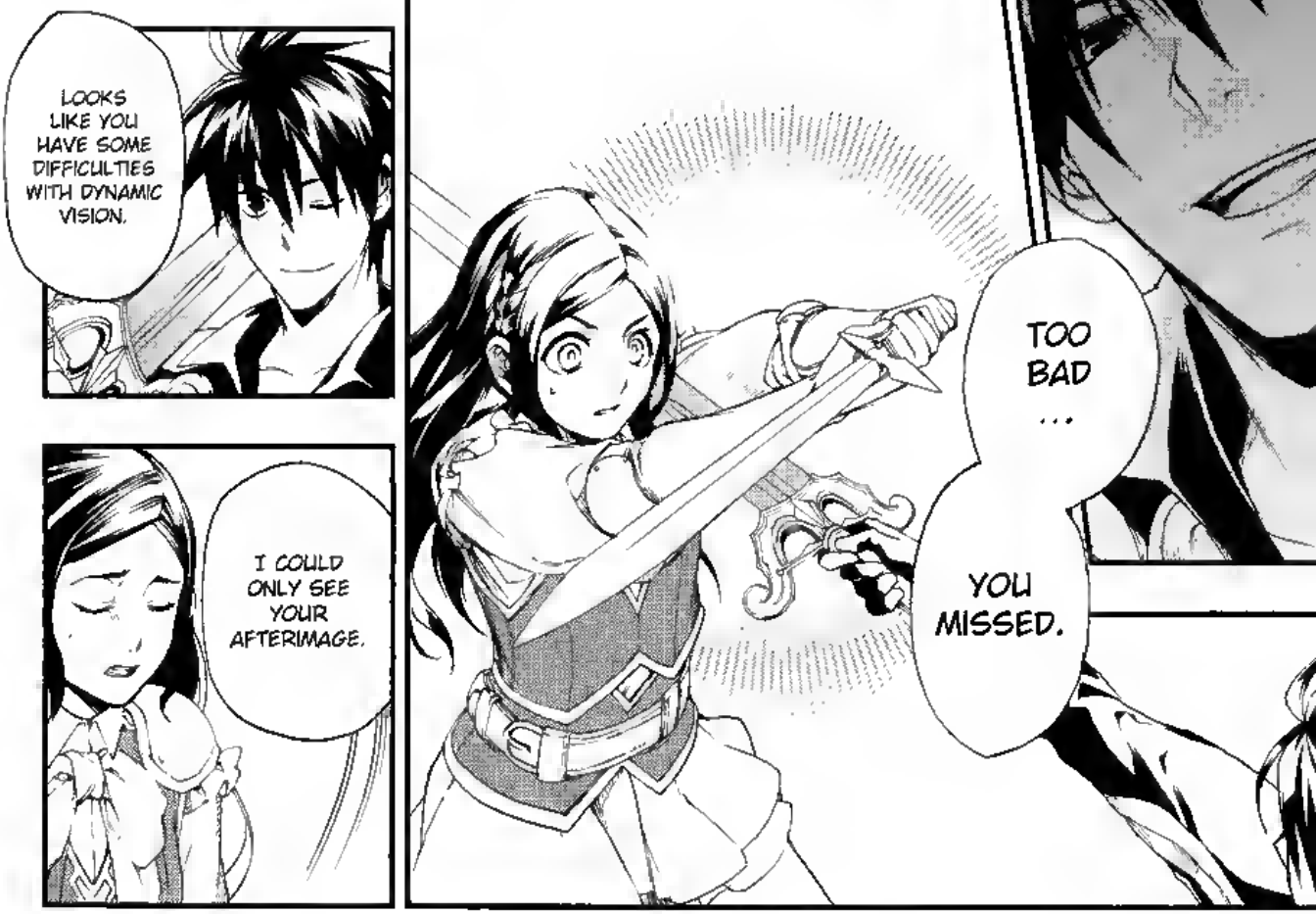
NONE THAT I CAN SEE.
IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD CORRECT?
ERM ...

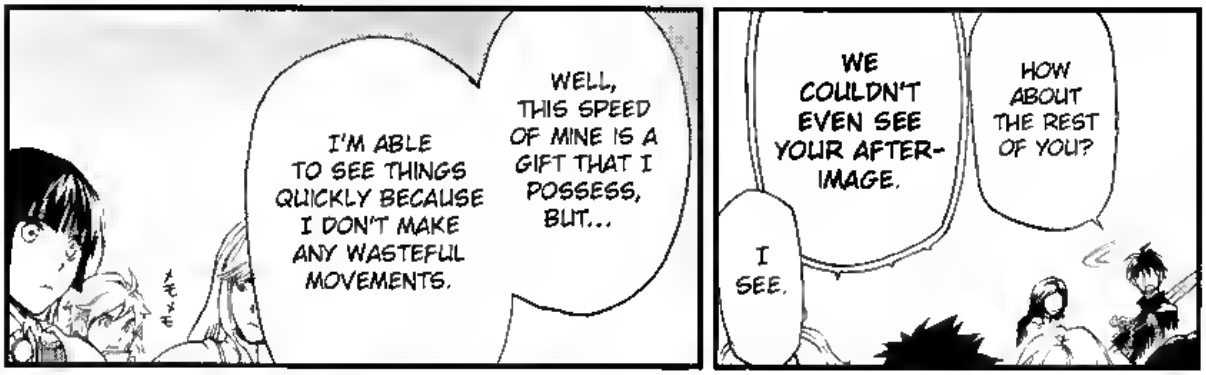

GENERALLY, THE MIDWAY STANCE IS THE STANCE THAT ALLOWS ONE TO COPE WITH BOTH OFFENSE AND DEFENSE EASILY.
WELL, AS LONG AS YOU TAKE A STANCE THAT YOU FEEL WOULD ALLOW YOURSELF TO SWING THE SWORD EASILY, ANYTHING WILL DO.
BUT, IF YOU CAN BECOME LIKE ME, ANYTHING WOULD DO.
I-I
See.


IF I HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY AT ALL, IT'LL BE YOUR "STRONG WILL" I GUESS.

THAT BEING SAID, I'LL BE GOING ALL OUT ON YOU, SELPHIE.
EEEHHH!?
I WANT ALL OF US TO CAREFULLY WATCH STARTING FROM HER STANCE TO HER DEFENSIVE MOVEMENTS.
The rest of you, step back.
B-B-B-B-BUT I-I-I-I'M NOT READY!!
OKAY.
YOU IDIOT ...
YOU THINK YOUR ENEMIES WOULD WAIT FOR YOU TO GET READY?
T-T-THAT'S TRUE...
Try your best
ALRIGHT ...
DEFEND YOURSELF AS IF YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET KILLED.

This time for sure...
I'M GOING TO GET YOU!!

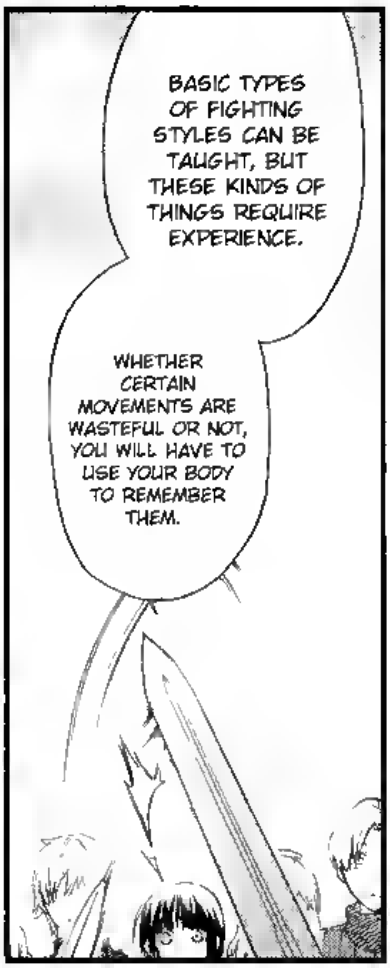

LOOKS LIKE YOU HAVE SOME DIFFICULTIES WITH DYNAMIC VISION.
I COULD ONLY SEE YOUR AFTERIMAGE.
TOO BAD ...
YOU MISSED.

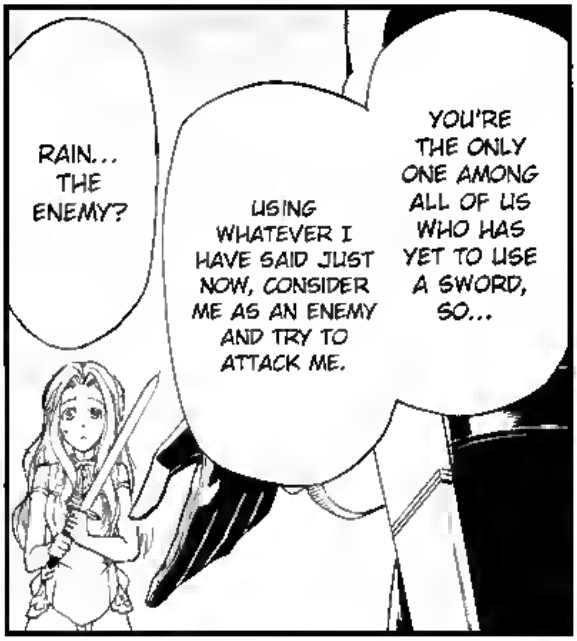

I'M ABLE TO SEE THINGS QUICKLY BECAUSE I DON'T MAKE ANY WASTEFUL MOVEMENTS.
WELL, THIS SPEED OF MINE IS A GIFT THAT I POSSESS, BUT...
WE COULDN'T EVEN SEE YOUR AFTER-IMAGE.
HOW ABOUT THE REST OF YOU?
I SEE.

UNTIL MY ATTACK...
FROM MY FIRST STEP...

IF YOU CUT DOWN ON EXCESS MOVEMENTS, NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, YOU WILL MORE OR LESS BE ABLE TO SEE QUICKLY AS WELL.
BUT OF COURSE, NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO SURPASS MY NATURAL SPEED BEFORE.

AH.
OKAY!
NEXT.
PRINCESS!


BASIC TYPES OF FIGHTING STYLES CAN BE TAUGHT, BUT THESE KINDS OF THINGS REQUIRE EXPERIENCE.
WHETHER CERTAIN MOVEMENTS ARE WASTEFUL OR NOT, YOU WILL HAVE TO USE YOUR BODY TO REMEMBER THEM.


RAIN... THE ENEMY?
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE AMONG ALL OF US WHO HAS YET TO USE A SWORD, SO...
USING WHATEVER I HAVE SAID JUST NOW, CONSIDER ME AS AN ENEMY AND TRY TO ATTACK ME.

IT'S JUST TRAINING.
BUT I'D LIKE YOU TO SERIOUSLY GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT.

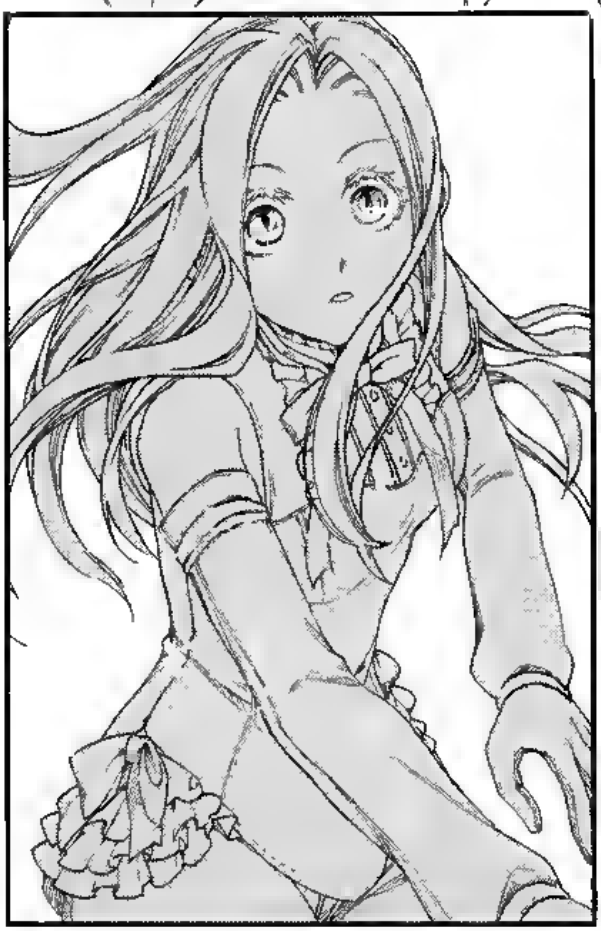
The eyes ...
Midway stance ...
Don't waste any movements ...

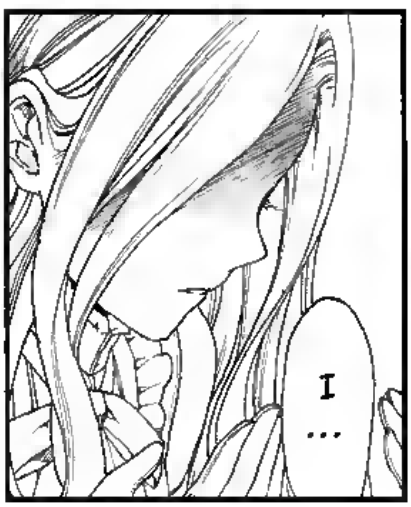
If this pressure of hers is due to natural talent, a part of it will definitely show itself.
Even if she has never wielded a sword before ...

Her resolution is good as well.

Her understanding so well... is it due to her obedient personality?

As I thought, it is talent...




I
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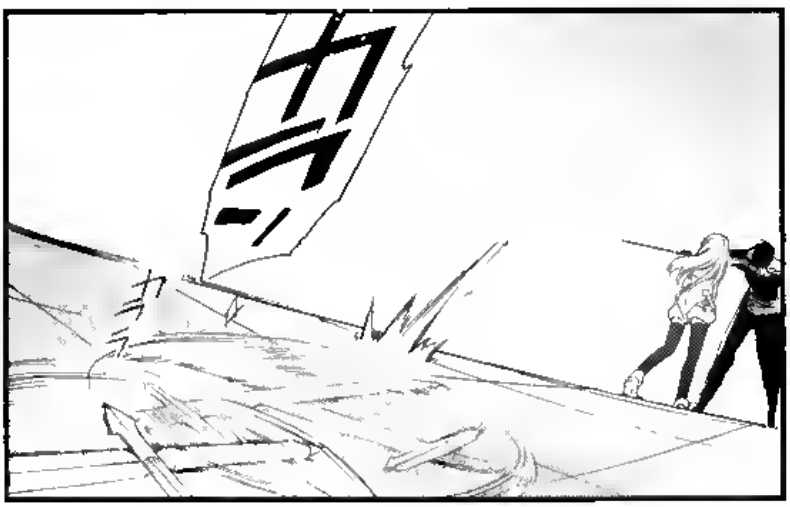
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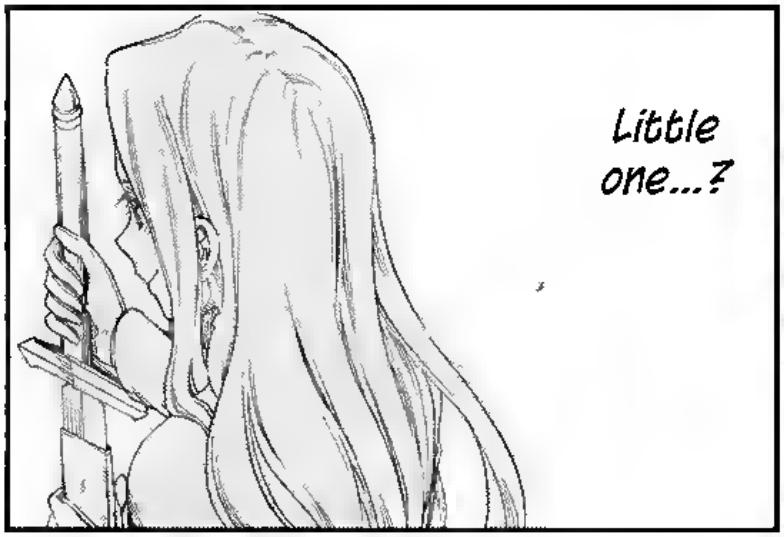
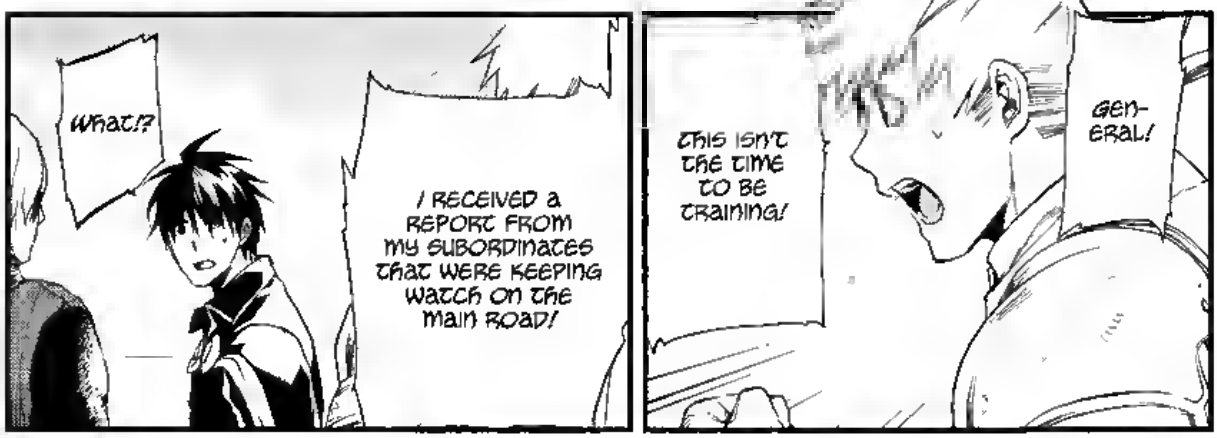
YOU HAVE GOOD MUSCLES.
IF YOU CONTINUE TRAINING, YOU WILL PROBABLY IMPROVE QUITE SIGNIFICANTLY.
REALLY!?

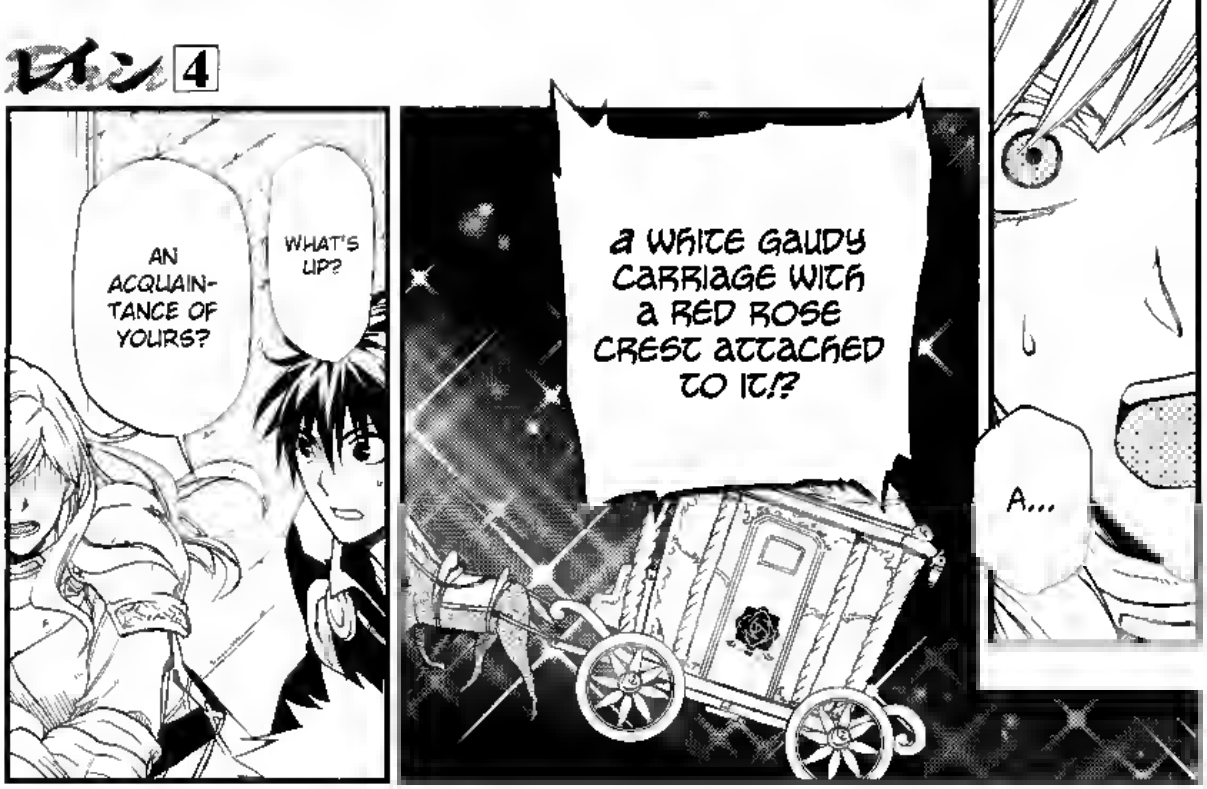
IMPRESSIVE!
WHEN I ACTUALLY REALIZED IT, MY SWORD WAS NO LONGER IN MY HANDS ...
RAIN, I COMPLETELY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU JUST DID!

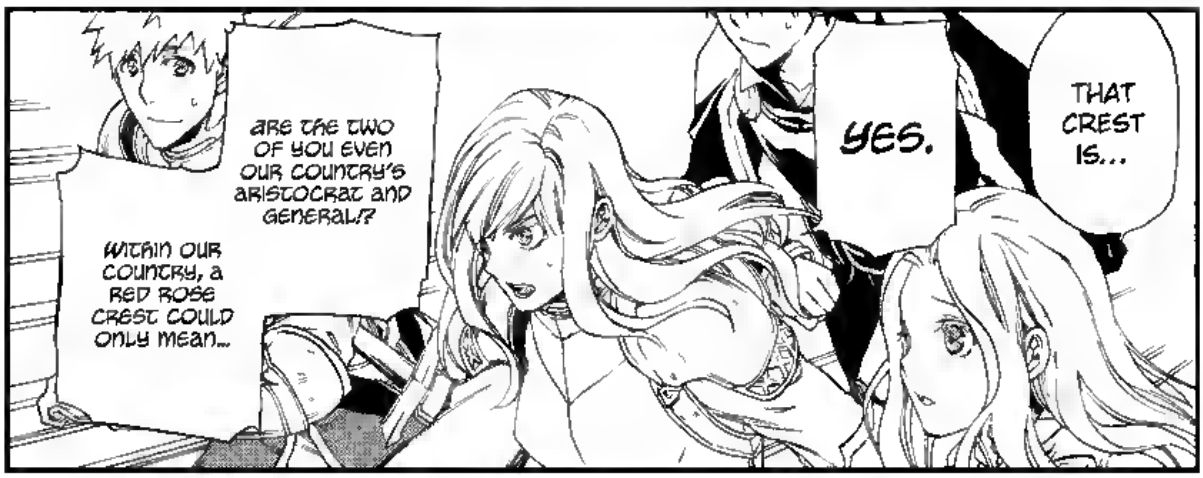
YOUR HIGHNESS, DID YOU SUSTAIN ANY INJURIES?

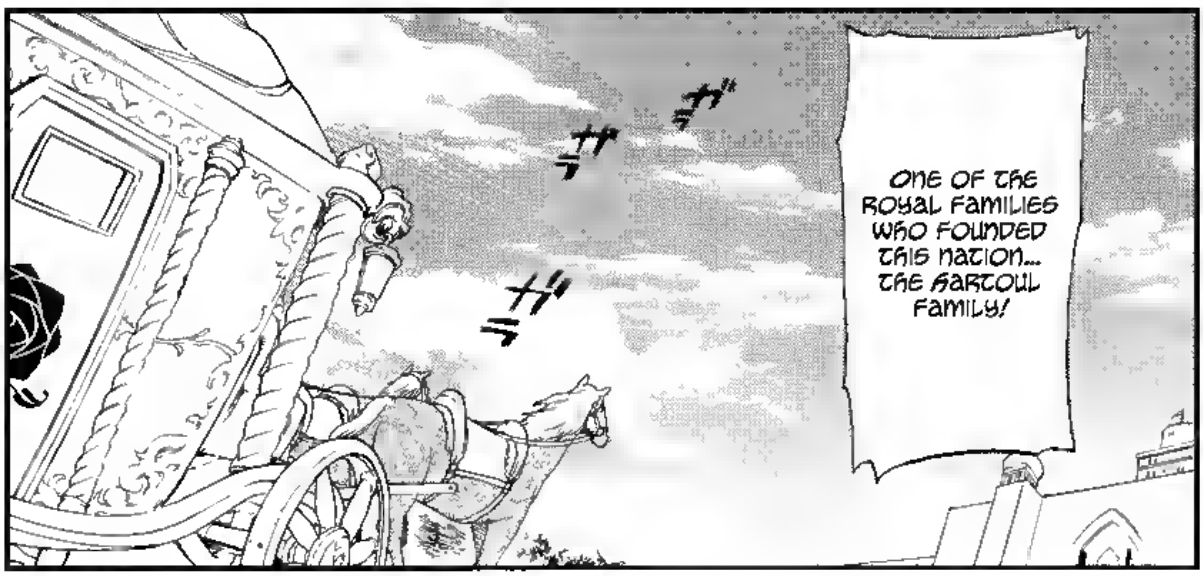

Little one...?

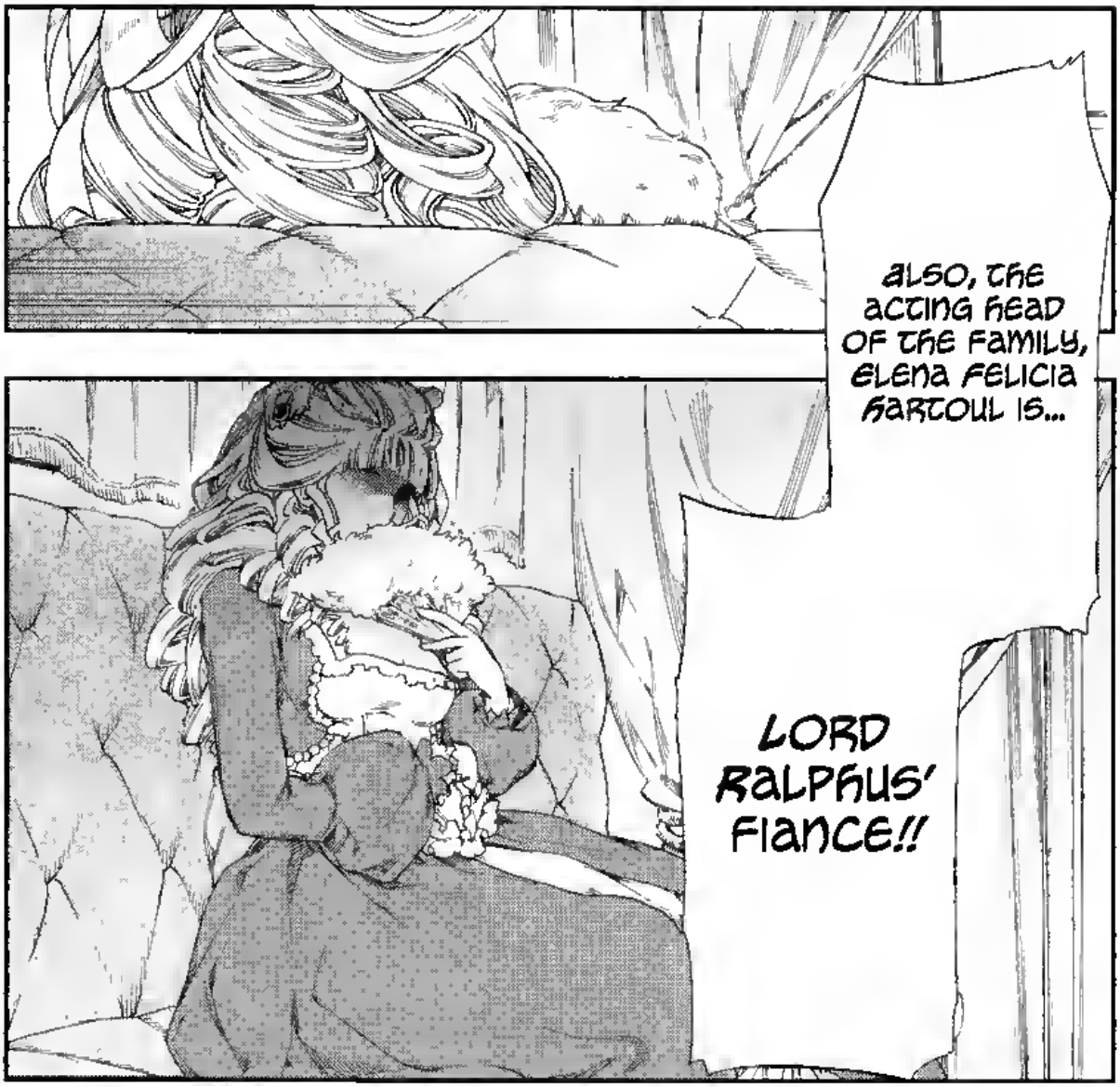

GEN-ERAL!
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO BE TRAINING!
WHAT!?
I RECEIVED A REPORT FROM MY SUBORDINATES THAT WERE KEEPING WATCH ON THE MAIN ROAD!

IT'S AN ENEMY ATTACK!!
FROM WHERE!
I DIDN'T RECEIVE ANY WORD FROM THE SPIES I SENT TO ZARMIN AND SAPHIR.
T-THAT'S A REPORT WE RECEIVED FROM OUR FAST HORSE


WHAT'S UP?
AN ACQUAINTANCE OF YOURS?
A WHITE GAUDY CARRIAGE WITH A RED ROSE CREST ATTACHED TO IT!?
A...


ARE THE TWO OF YOU EVEN OUR COUNTRY'S ARISTOCRAT AND GENERAL!?
WITHIN OUR COUNTRY, A RED ROSE CREST COULD ONLY MEAN...
YES.
THAT CREST IS...


ONE OF THE ROYAL FAMILIES WHO FOUNDED THIS NATION... THE BARTOUL FAMILY!


ALSO, THE ACTING HEAD OF THE FAMILY, ELENA FELICIA HARTOUL IS...
LORD RALPHUS' FIANCE!!

FIANCE EEEEE!?

RAIN

Sense Scans
www.sense-scans.com
#Sense@irc.irchighway.net

Raws : Sense-Scans
Translator : zkein
Proofreader : Frogmage
Cleaner : Jack of Hearts & Minty
Typesetter : li_er
Quality Checker : Revan

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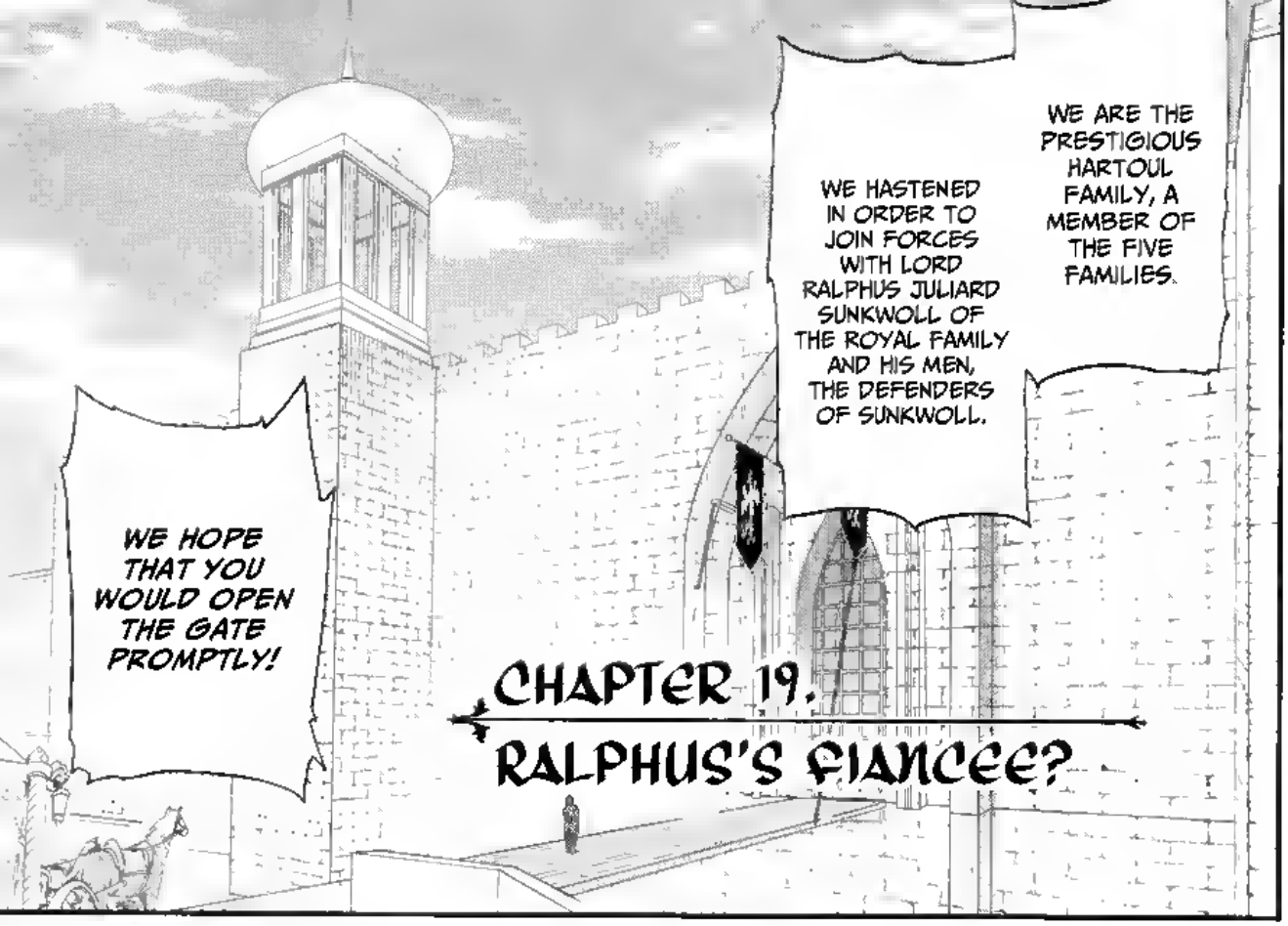
WE ARE THE PRESTIGIOUS HARTOUL FAMILY, A MEMBER OF THE FIVE FAMILIES.
WE HASTENED IN ORDER TO JOIN FORCES WITH LORD RALPHUS JULIARD SUNKWOLL OF THE ROYAL FAMILY AND HIS MEN, THE DEFENDERS OF SUNKWOLL.
WE HOPE THAT YOU WOULD OPEN THE GATE PROMPTLY!
CHAPTER 19.
RALPHUS'S FIANCEE?

SO, WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
THEY ARE THAT KIND OF PEOPLE AFTER ALL.
IT'S PROBABLY INTENTIONAL.
SO THEY JUST BARGED INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S HOUSES WHILE IGNORING THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, HUH?

YOU MIGHT REGRET IT, YOU KNOW?
BRING THEM IN.
SINCE THEY ARE RALPHUS' ACQUAINTANCES, WE CAN'T TURN THEM DOWN.
LOOKS LIKE THEY ARE HERE TO AID US. THEIR IDENTITIES ARE CERTAIN RIGHT?

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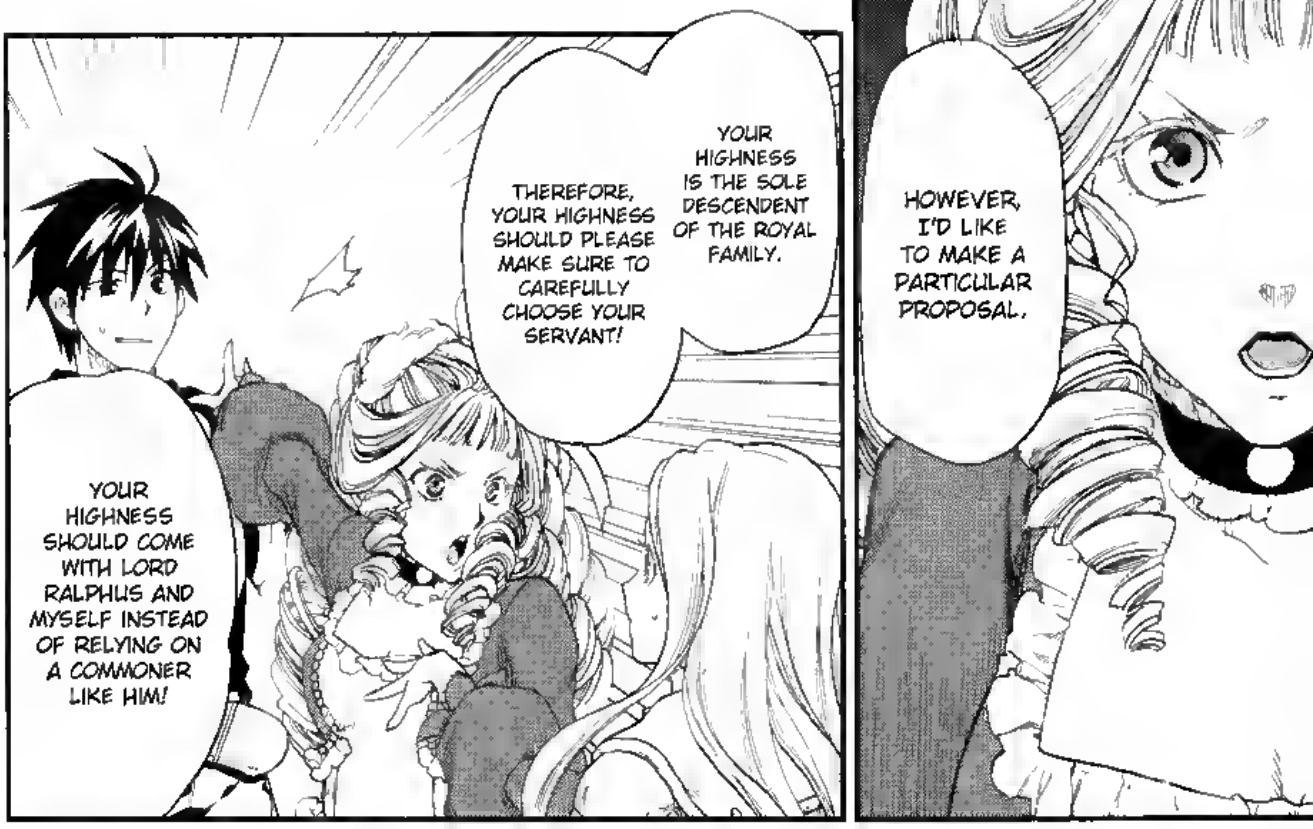
ガラ
ガラ
ガラ
ガラ
WELL.
THIS IS QUITE A SHABBY LOOKING CASTLE.
IT EVEN HAS A COUNTRY-SIDE REEK TO IT.

WHERE ARE YOU, MY LORD!?
AAH...
BUT I WILL TOLERATE THIS!
FOR THE SAKE OF LORD RALPHUS!!
I CAN HEAR YOU!
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?
WHO'S THIS STUPID WOMAN?
...OI
OH, IT'S HER MAJESTY, PRINCESS SHELFA.
I'D LIKE TO GREET YOU FORMALLY, IF POSSIBLE.
YOU TALK REALLY BIG EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE JUST A COMMONER, JUDGING BY YOUR LOOKS.
YOU DIRTY LOOKING GUY, DRESSED IN BLACK!
네


YOUR HIGHNESS IS THE SOLE DESCENDENT OF THE ROYAL FAMILY.
THEREFORE, YOUR HIGHNESS SHOULD PLEASE MAKE SURE TO CAREFULLY CHOOSE YOUR SERVANT!
YOUR HIGHNESS SHOULD COME WITH LORD RALPHUS AND MYSELF INSTEAD OF RELYING ON A COMMONER LIKE HIM!
HOWEVER, I'D LIKE TO MAKE A PARTICULAR PROPOSAL.

LORD OF THE CASTLE... IS HE THE RUMORED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF?
HE'S ONLY 17 OR 18, ISN'T HE?
THAT'S THE "UNKNOWN GENIUS SWORDSMAN".
YOU'RE MAKING QUITE A LOT OF COMMENTS IN FRONT OF THE LORD OF THIS CASTLE.

FOR A COMMONER TO TAKE UP THE GLORIOUS POSITION OF "COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF", THE PREVIOUS KING MUST HAVE BEEN AN ECCENTRIC.
HE REALLY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ONE!
I can hear you loud and clear.

THERE'S NO WAY A COMMONER LIKE HIM CAN PROTECT ANYTHING!
HUH ...?
はは
はは
はは
GOOD GRIEF!

WHAT ...
NOT DO...!?
CAN I...
HI ...
LIWA ...
TRY SAYING IT AGAIN
ARGH ...
GENERAL! STOP!!

YOU EVEN CARE FOR SMALL FRY LIKE THIS.
PRINCESS, YOU'RE REALLY KINDHEARTED.

WHY YOU ...
I'M FINE.
I'm the one who's making others worry.
PRIN-CESS.
PLEASE LEAVE THIS MATTER TO US.
M-MY APOLOGIES ...
IT'S A DISGRACE FOR ARISTO-CRATS TO ACTUALLY BE CORNERED BY COMMONERS!
DIS-GRACE-FUL!

SINCE JUST NOW, YOU'VE BEEN CALLING THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE ARISTOCRAT FAMILIES "PRINCESS" OVER AND OVER...
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE STANDING IN FRONT OF?
WE'LL MAKE YOU PAY FOR THE SIN OF MOCKING THE PRINCESS.
SO IT LOOKS LIKE YOU GUYS WON'T UNDERSTAND UNTIL YOU EXPERIENCE REAL PAIN, HUH?
IN MY EYES, THESE TWO ARE MOST SUITABLE TO BE CALLED THE STRONGEST GUARDS IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY!
IT'D BE BETTER FOR YOU NOT TO OPEN YOUR MOUTH SO WIDELY.

OKAY THEN.
YOUR ATTENTION, GUYS!
HMM...
WE'LL CONTINUE WITH OUR LESSON.
YOUR TEACHER HERE WILL DEMONSTRATE WHAT REAL COMBAT IS.
I'LL TEACH YOU...
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE STRONGEST.
ピキ
おお。
THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!
HE'S BACK TO HIS USUAL SELF.
THANK GOODNESS

HE'S FAST!
DON'T ACT SO TOUGH, YOU BRAT!
"THE TIP OF THE SWORD IS A SIMPLE MATTER. IF YOU CATCH IT, YOU WIN."
EXAMPLE ONE.
I CAN'T MOVE...
UH

MOVING ON TO EXAMPLE TWO.

YOUR BACK IS WIDE OPEN!!
JUST THAT, IF THE ENEMY'S WEAPON HAPPENED TO BE IN GOOD CONDITION LIKE THIS ONE...
...WHICH IS THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS UP UNTIL HERE.
FIRST, YOU TAKE AWAY HIS WEAPON.

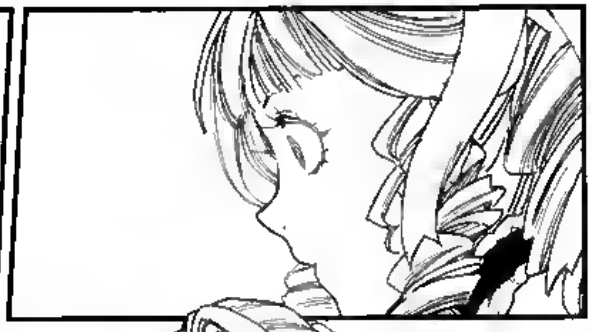
SECOND, MAKE IT INTO A SHAPE THAT'S EASY TO USE.
THIRD, WAIT FOR YOUR TARGET TO FALL CLOSER ...
DON'T TELL ME...
OI BRAT!
O ...

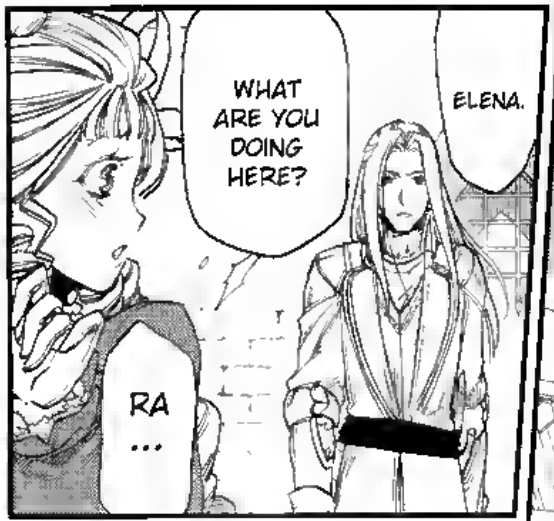
KYA AAA!!
H-H-H-
H-H-H-OW
...
HOW INSOLENT!
HOW INSOLENT!
DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH IT COST TO CUSTOMIZE THIS HORSE CARRIAGE!?
SHUT UP!
IT'S NOT AS BAD AS MARCHING INTO THE BATTLEFIELD IN A CARRIAGE!

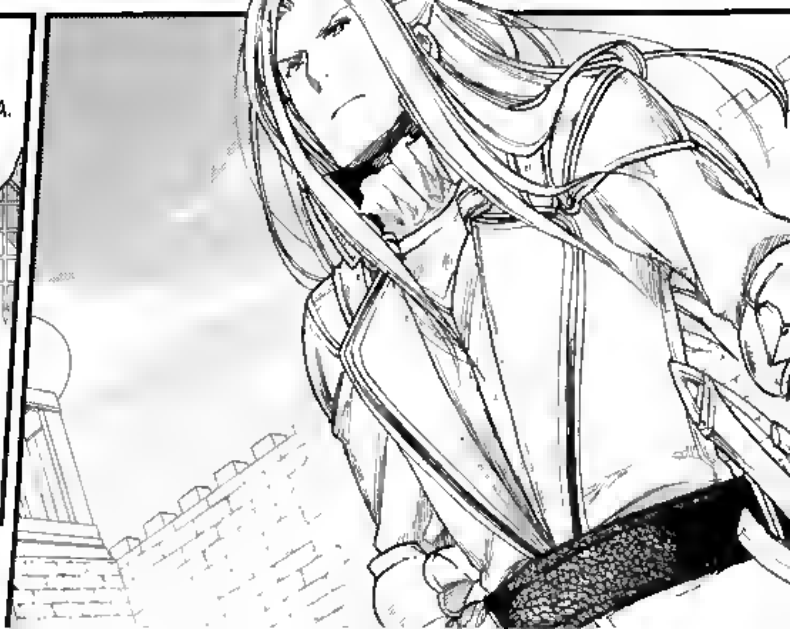
I STILL DON'T GET WHY SHE DID THAT!!
THAT'S RIGHT!
...UH.
I WILL NOT FORGIVE YOU!!
FINE BY ME!
YOU GUYS!
I WANT ALL OF YOU TO TEACH THEM A LESSON!!
BRING IT ON!!

EVERYONE! CALM YOUR-SELVES!!!

AH.

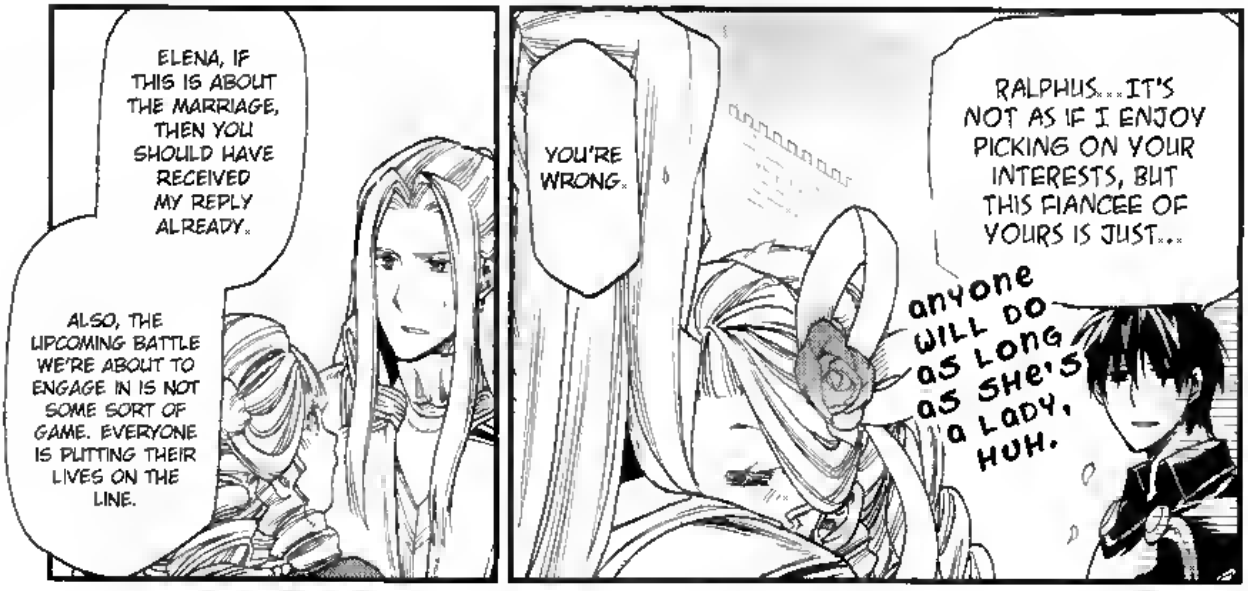



RA ...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
ELENA.



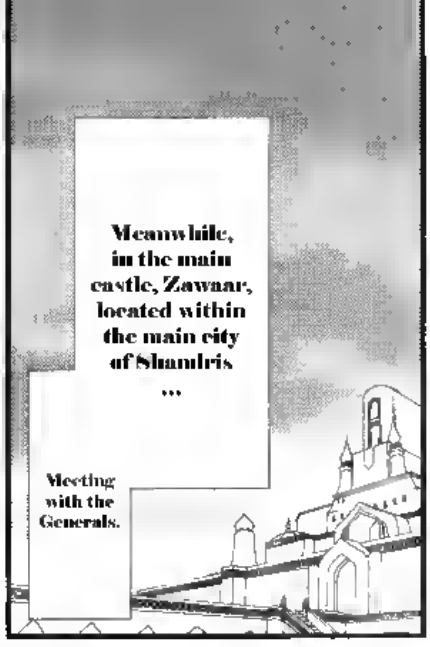
LORD RALPHUS ...
FINALLY WE MEET.

I DON'T KNOW HOW I SHOULD EXPRESS THIS JOY THAT'S BURSTING TO ESCAPE FROM MY HEART.
AAH.


ELENA, IF THIS IS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE, THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED MY REPLY ALREADY.
ALSO, THE UPCOMING BATTLE WE'RE ABOUT TO ENGAGE IN IS NOT SOME SORT OF GAME. EVERYONE IS PUTTING THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE.
YOU'RE WRONG.
RALPHUS...IT'S NOT AS IF I ENJOY PICKING ON YOUR INTERESTS, BUT THIS FIANCEE OF YOURS IS JUST...
anyone WILL DO AS LONG AS SHE'S A LADY, HUH.

I HAVE ALREADY RESOLVED MYSELF TO OFFER MY LIFE FOR YOUR SAKE AS WELL, MY LORD!
AND I'M NOT PLANNING TO ALLOW MY BELOVED LORD FALL INTO A LIFE CRISIS!
FOR THAT PUEPOSE, I PEESENT TO YOU EEINFOECE-MENTS!
HOESEMEN AND FOOT SOLDIEES AMOUNTING TO 500!
HOW, IF YOU WOULD KINDLY ACCEPT THEM, LOED EALPHNS!
EVEN IF YOU TELL ME THAT... THIS IS TROUBLE-SOME...
THE REIN-FORCE-MENTS ...
SHE SURE BROUGHT THE SOMEWHAT AWFUL ONES FOR US, HUH.
Ralu and Ralphns's troops combined ...
With the addition of the intruder's troops, their number total up to six thousand and eight hundred.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IS AS WHAT WE'VE JUST EXPLAINED.
ONCE THE PREPARATIONS ARE READY, WE WILL COMMENCE OUR INVASION ON SUNKWOLL IMMEDIATELY.


Meanwhile, in the main castle, Zawaar, located within the main city of Shamlris ...
Meeting with the Generals.

ARE THERE ANY OBJECTIONS?

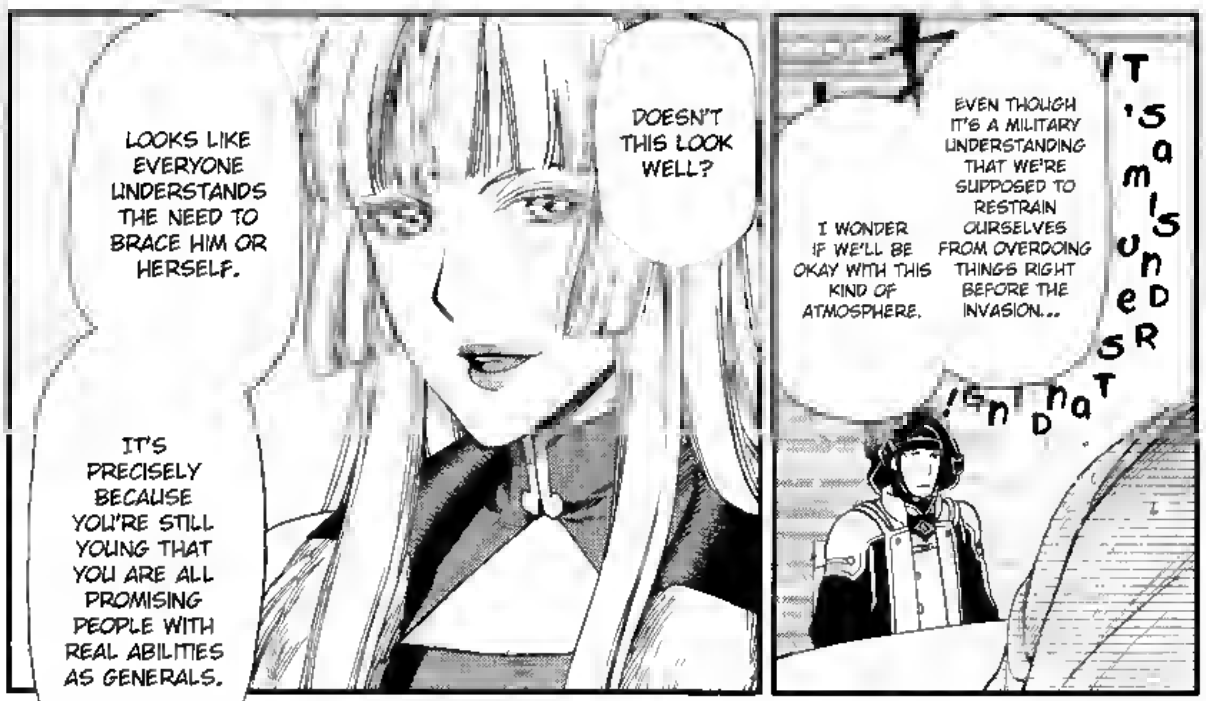
I'M JUST CURIOUS AS TO WHY YOU HAVE DECIDED TO NARROW DOWN OUR TARGET TO SAPHIR ONLY.
I-IT'S NOT THAT I'M DISSATISFIED OR ANYTHING!
IS THERE ANY PART YOU'RE DISSATISFIED WITH, ZARTS?
I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE THE FIRST ONE TO AGREE ON THIS PLAN, BUT...

EVEN I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THAT, BUT ...
UNFORTUNATELY, IT WON'T GO AS WELL AS WE THINK IT WILL.
YEAH, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.
IF WE'RE GOING TO ATTACK THEM, WOULDN'T IT BETTER TO ATTACK THE WHOLE OF SUNKWOLL ALTOGETHER INSTEAD OF COMMENCING SUCH A SMALL-SCALE ASSAULT?
L-LORD JOE!
IN ITSELF, I DO NOT REALLY AGREE WITH THIS INVASION PLAN.
I'D LIKE TO CAREFULLY PLAN THIS OUT TO AVOID MAKING AN ENEMY OUT OF HIM.
ACCORDING TO THE REPORTS OF THE OBSERVATION A FEW DAYS BACK, RAIN IS RESIDING WITHIN THAT COUNTRY.
WELL THEN, I SHALL BE MORE DISCREET IN MY CAUTIOUS ADVICE LEST THE MORALE OF THE TROOPS MIGHT GET AFFECTED.
SHALL WE PROCEED ON TO DISCUSSING OUR WINNING STRATEGY?
BUT I DON'T PLAN TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THAT CAUTIOUS ADVICE YOU HAVE JUST PROVIDED US, YOU KNOW.
THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IS REALLY STRICT.

I'D LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT OUR TARGET WOULD ONLY BE SAPHIR AND I'D ALSO LIKE YOU ALL TO STAY OUT OF ANY OTHER UNRELATED MATTERS.
WELL, I'LL BE GOING AS WELL, THIS TIME ROUND.
OH, YOUR HIGHNESS IS LEADING THE INVASION!
FU FU ...
I'LL LEAVE THAT TO YOU.
YES, BUT I'LL BE LEAVING THE COMMANDING OF THE TROOPS TO JOE AS USUAL.
I JUST WANT TO ACCOMPANY ALL OF YOU TO THE VERY END.
HEHE, MY ARMS ARE TWITCHING ALREADY!
SUNK-WOLL, EH?
THAT FAMOUS "UNKNOWN GENIUS SWORDS-MAN"
I WANT TO TRY MEETING HIM, JUNNA!
ME TOO! MY BROTHER!
ARE YOU AN IDIOT, SEYL? WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY FAMOUS AND UNKNOWN?
ISN'T THAT CONTRA-DICTORY?
Aha ha
OH YEAH.

DON'T "AHAHA" ME!!
WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS ...
UH.
NO!
IT'S NOT LIKE I'M TRYING TO FIND FAULT WITH SEYL OR ANYTHING ...

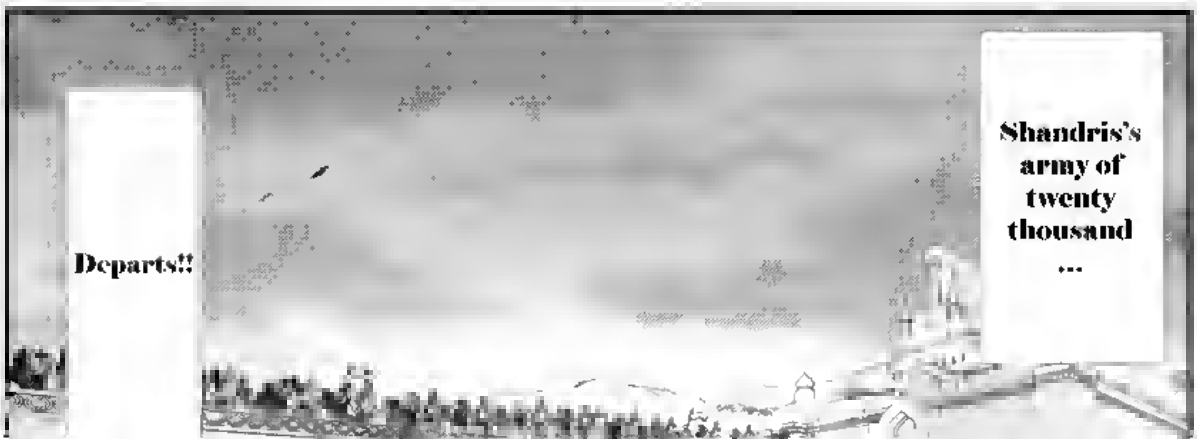
JU...
JUNNA!!
EH!!


DOESN'T THIS LOOK WELL?
LOOKS LIKE EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE NEED TO BRACE HIM OR HERSELF.
IT'S PRECISELY BECAUSE YOU'RE STILL YOUNG THAT YOU ARE ALL PROMISING PEOPLE WITH REAL ABILITIES AS GENERALS.
I WONDER IF WE'LL BE OKAY WITH THIS KIND OF ATMOSPHERE.
EVEN THOUGH IT'S A MILITARY UNDERSTANDING THAT WE'RE SUPPOSED TO RESTRAIN OURSELVES FROM OVERDOING THINGS RIGHT BEFORE THE INVASION...
IT'S A MISUNDERSTANDING!

カタン
WHETHER YOU ARE A GENIUS OR NOT, WE CANNOT EXPECT TO CHANGE THE FATE OF A COUNTRY THAT IS DECAYING AWAY WITH JUST PURE INDIVIDUAL VALOR.
MY FIVE GENERALS OF SHANDRIS.
AND ALSO THE LEADERS WHO LEAD AN ARMY OF TWENTY THOUSAND ...

SHOW ME THE ABILITIES YOU TRULY HOLD!

YES, YOUR HIGHNESS!!


Departs!!
Shandris's army of twenty thousand ...

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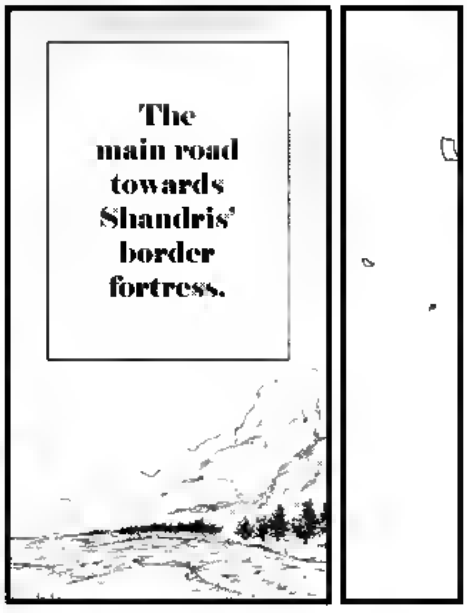
CHAPTER 20. THE ROAR OF A BEAST.

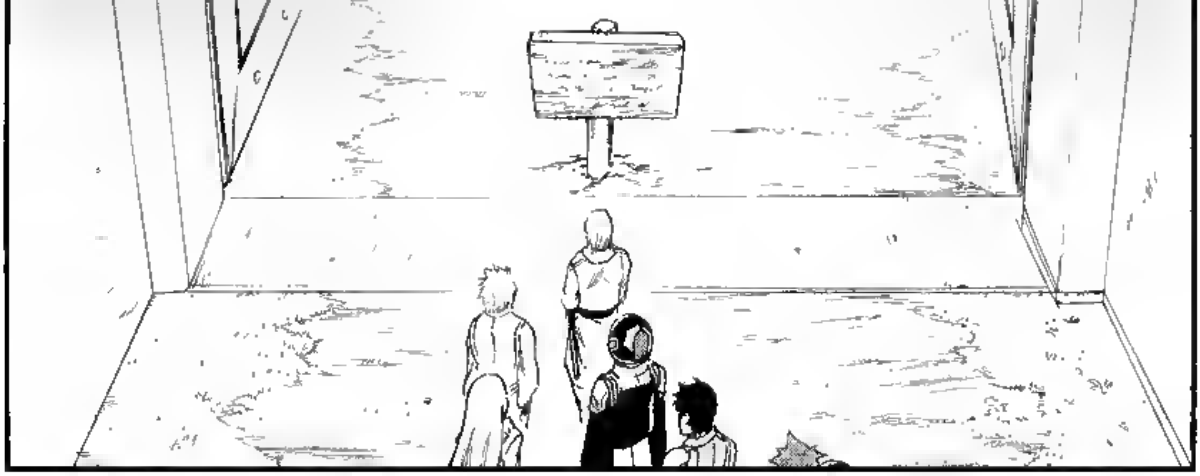


I'M GOING TO WORK HARDER AND HELP BIG BROTHER.
ME TOO.
THAT'S TRUE. WE'D BETTER WORK HARDER AS WELL.
DON'T EVER THINK OF ENGAGING HIM ONE-ON-ONE.
JUST IN CASE... IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER WITH RAIN WHILE UNAIDED IN THIS COURSE OF BATTLE...
SEYL.
I WANT TO ADVISE YOU ON SOME-THING.
OF COURSE.
THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU...
LORD JOE, I'M SURE YOU ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE STRENGTH WE POSSESS RIGHT.
...IS HE REALLY THAT STRONG?

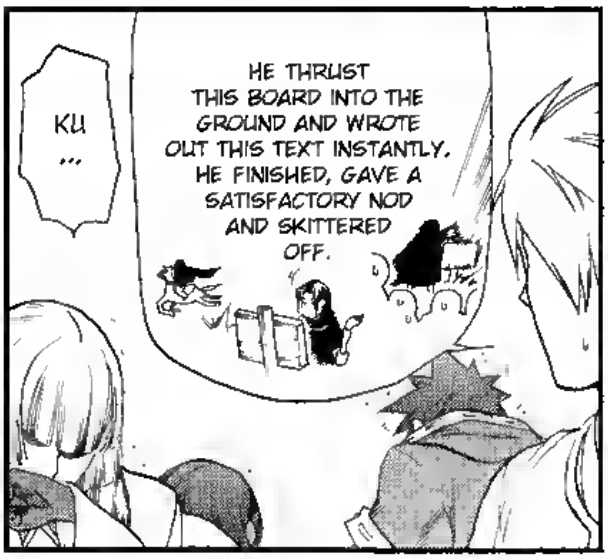
IF YOU TRY FIGHTING HIM 10 TIMES, YOU'LL LOSE ALL 10 BATTLES.
HAVING SAID THAT, I KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO RUN AWAY FROM BATTLE IN FRONT OF EVERYONE ELSE. THAT'S WHY, AS MUCH AS I CAN, I WILL RUSH TO YOUR AID.
BUT ONLY IF THAT HAPPENS.

UNDER-STOOD!
IF WE CATCH SIGHT OF HIM, THE MOST WE'LL DO IS LOOK AND THEN WE'LL QUICKLY RETREAT!
BUT I THINK YOU SHOULDN'T TELL THAT TO ZARTS.
HE HATES LOSING AFTER ALL.
THAT'S TRUE.

COM-MANDER-IN-CHIEF!
JUST BEYOND THE FORTRESS OF THE NATION'S BORDER... I'M NOT SURE IF I SHOULD CALL IT SOMETHING STRANGE... THAT...
IT'S SOMEWHAT HARD TO DESCRIBE.

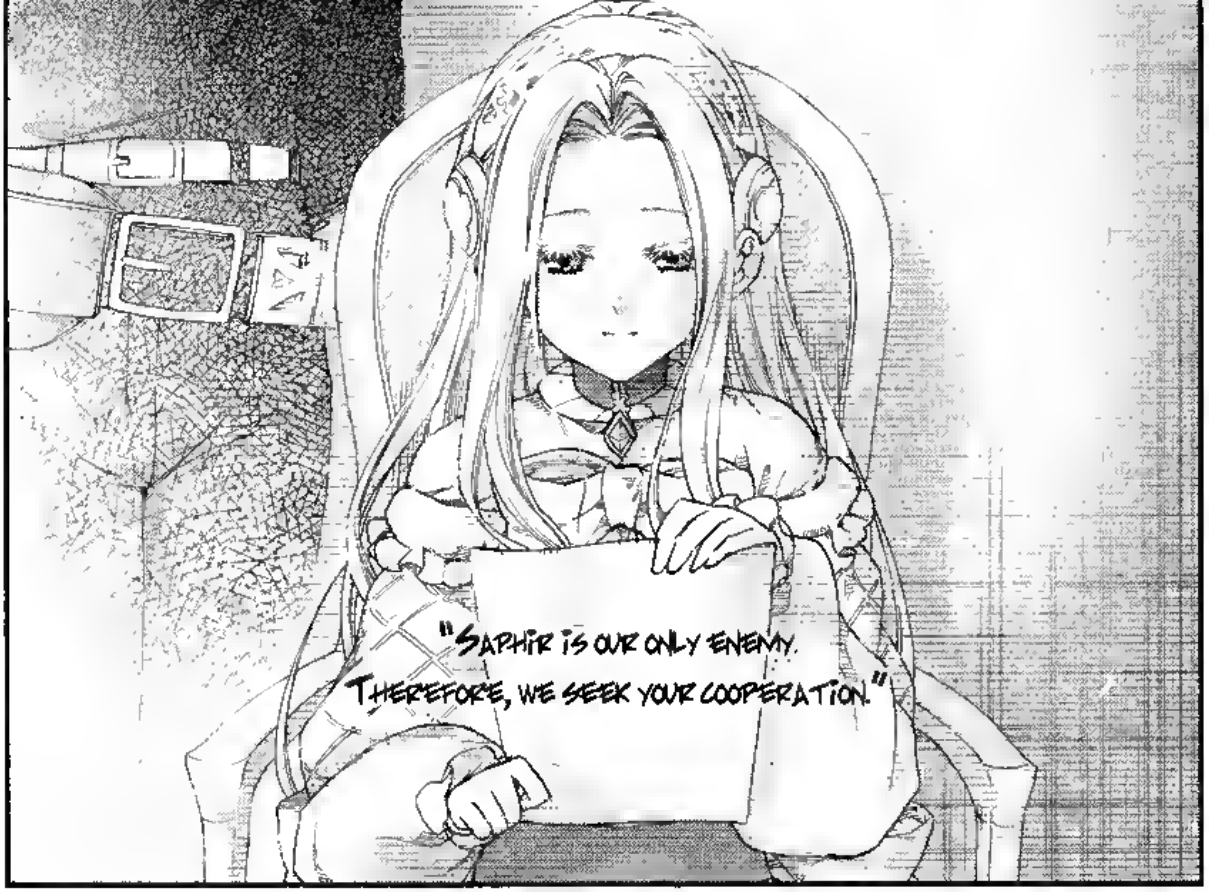


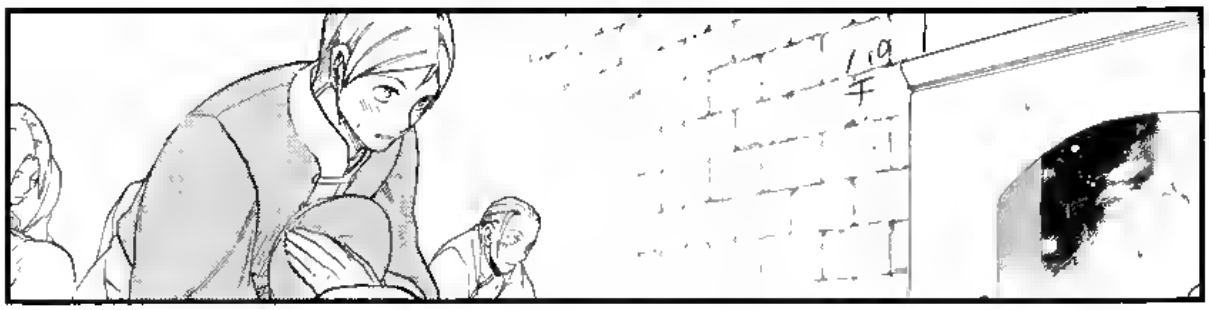
To the people who carry the evil intention of invading our nation...
If you're not willing to get a change of heart, cast away your hopes and wishes henceforth.
Or to put it simply...
"DON'T UNDERES-TIMATE ME"
Regards, Black-Masked Phantom thief.

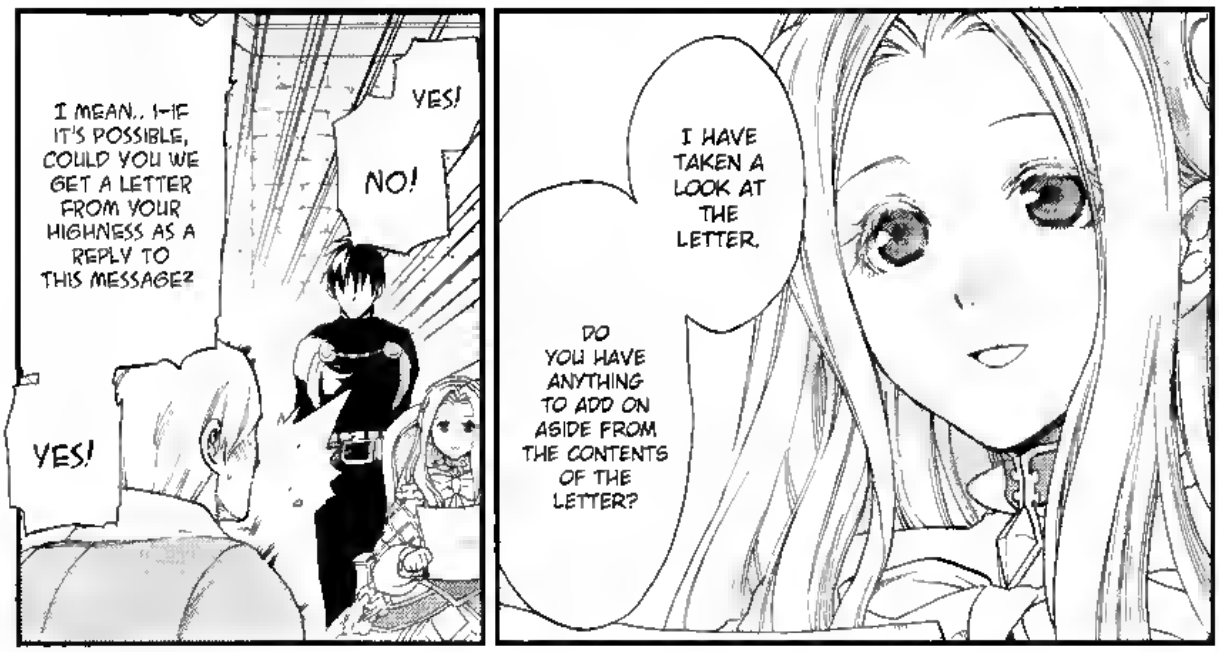

KU...
HE THRUST THIS BOARD INTO THE GROUND AND WROTE OUT THIS TEXT INSTANTLY. HE FINISHED, GAVE A SATISFACTORY NOD AND SKITTERED OFF.

IN ANY CASE, A SOUR-LOOKING MAN CAME HERE CARRYING THIS SIGNBOARD OVER HIS SHOULDER A MOMENT AGO...
Hoo
WHAT SKILLFUL WRITING.

AHA HA HA!!
DID HE SAY HE WAS GUNTHER?
HE EVEN GOT HIS SUBORDINATE TO PURPOSELY DO THIS KIND OF THING...
WHAT A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY GUY!
YOU'RE RIGHT!
WHAT MEANING IS THERE TO DOING THIS?
I THOUGHT THAT HIS REAL INTENTION WAS TO SCOUT THIS PLACE, BUT...
I THINK THAT THIS LOOKS LIKE A COMPLETE PRANK.
Why is it upsetting them?
WHYY!!
WHY ISN'T ANYONE GETTING THIS!
THIS TEXT IS OBVIOUSLY A DECLARATION OF WAR, ISN'T IT!
DON'T GET SO WORKED UP, ZARTS.
HE'S NOT OUR ENEMY.
IN ORDER FOR US TO NOT BE MISUNDERSTOOD, I'LL BE SENDING A MESSAGE.
AND THE CONTENT... WELL...


"SAPHIR IS OUR ONLY ENEMY.
THEREFORE, WE SEEK YOUR COOPERATION."

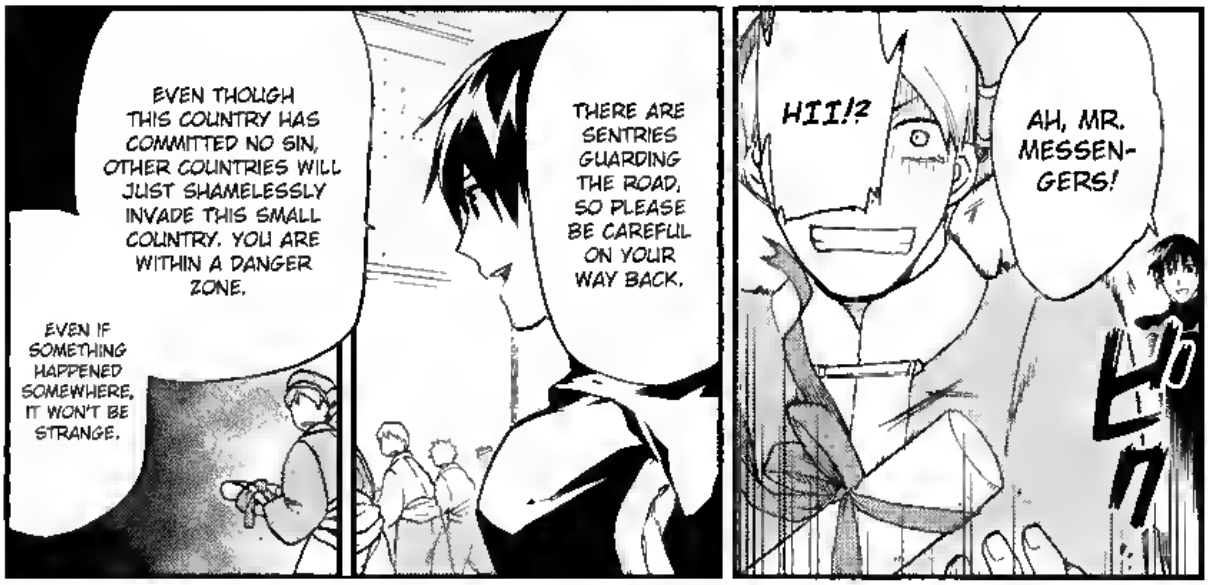



I HAVE TAKEN A LOOK AT THE LETTER.
DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD ON ASIDE FROM THE CONTENTS OF THE LETTER?
YES!
NO!
I MEAN.. I-IF IT'S POSSIBLE, COULD YOU WE GET A LETTER FROM YOUR HIGHNESS AS A REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE?
YES!

EH?
NO ...
AH, YOU MUST BE LORD RAIN ...
IF YOU DON'T FEEL TOO WELL, WHY DON'T YOU GET A LITTLE REST?
MR. MESSENGERS!
IF YOU FEEL THAT UPTIGHT, WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOURSELF MORE COMFORTABLE?
AAAH
OH, YOU KNOW OF ME?
I AM HONORED.
I-IT'S NOTHING!!
SIGNBOARD?
AN ELOQUENT YOUNG MAN LIKE HIMSELF COULDN'T HAVE POSSIBLY MADE THAT SIGNBOARD, RIGHT?
OI, NO MATTER HOW I LOOK AT HIM, WE MUST BE MISTAKEN RIGHT!
WE'D LIKE TO WAIT FOR HER HIGHNESS TO FINISH WRITING HER REPLY.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR THAT.

EH!? EEHH!!?
"WHY WAS A REPLY TO A MESSAGE THAT HAS JUST BARELY ARRIVED PREPARED BEFOREHAND", IS IT?
EH?
I HAD ONE PREPARED ALREADY.
WELL ...
I WONDER WHY?
はははは
ふふふふ

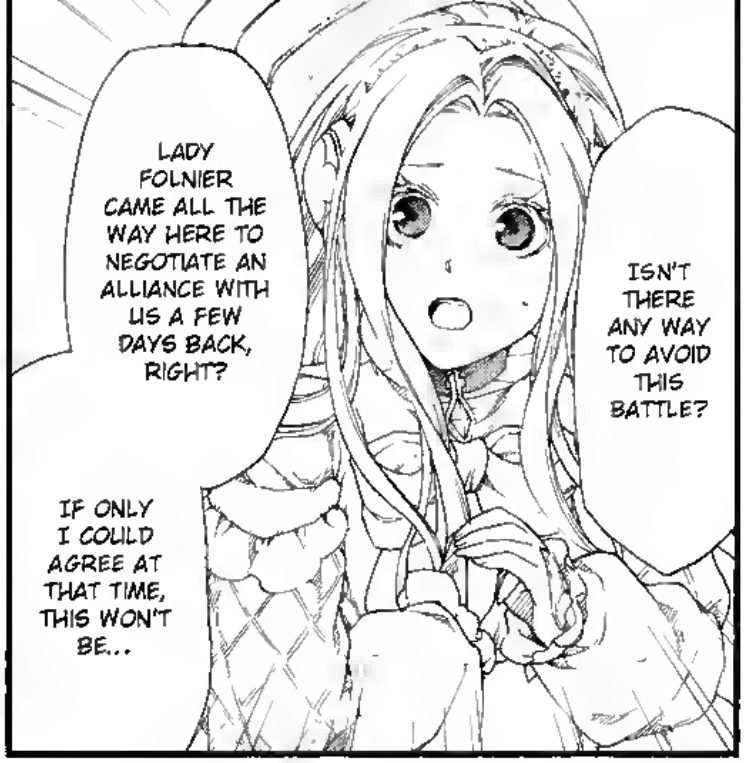
W...
WE'LL TAKE OUR LEAVE!!
T...
T-T-T-THEN.
WHY ARE THEY SMILING!?
OR ARE THEY ACTUALLY REALLY ANGRY!?


THERE ARE SENTRIES GUARDING THE ROAD, SO PLEASE BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY BACK.
EVEN THOUGH THIS COUNTRY HAS COMMITTED NO SIN, OTHER COUNTRIES WILL JUST SHAMELESSLY INVADE THIS SMALL COUNTRY. YOU ARE WITHIN A DANGER ZONE.
EVEN IF SOMETHING HAPPENED SOMEWHERE, IT WON'T BE STRANGE.
AH, MR. MESSEN-GERS!
HII!?

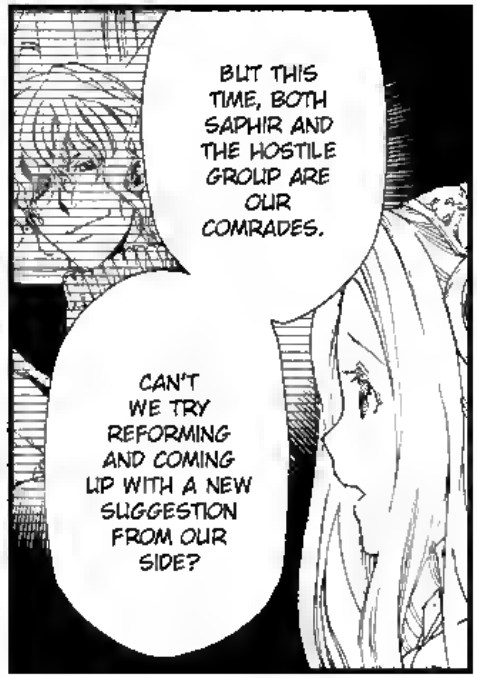
I SINCERELY HOPE YOU WILL BE CAREFUL ON YOUR WAY BACK!

YOUR DILIGENT SPEECH AND CONDUCT WERE REALLY HILARIOUS!
YEP!
THAT, HUH.
SO?
HILARIOUS, WASN'T IT?
Those flustered looks
THAT ASIDE ...
IT'S AS WE EXPECTED, HUH.
I...
EVEN THOUGH I HAD ONLY LIVED WITHIN THE CASTLE FOR ALMOST MY ENTIRE LIFE, THIS COUNTRY IS STILL MY HOMETOWN.
IT'S TERRIBLE... TO WATCH AS YOUR OWN BIRTHPLACE GETS INVADED.
IN OTHER WORDS, "WE ARE NOT GOING TO LAY A FINGER ON YOU, SO WE WANT YOU TO OVERLOOK THIS INVASION."

NO...EVEN IF YOU DID AGREE, DO YOU THINK THE OTHER PARTY WOULDN'T RETRACT THE PROPOSAL AT THE LAST MINUTE?
AT THAT TIME, WE GAVE THEM THE IMPRESSION THAT WE WERE PENNILESS MASTERS WITH OUR SUBORDINATES BEHIND US.

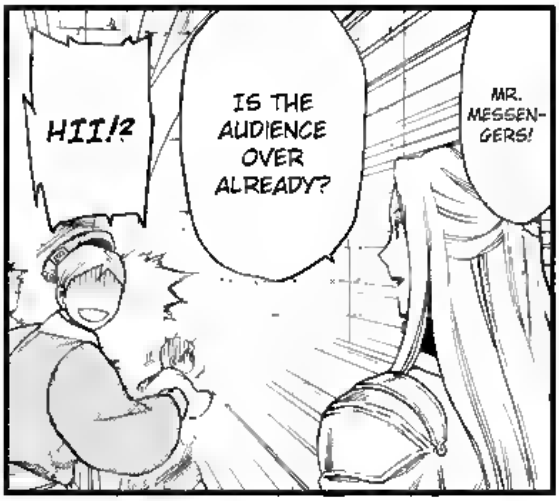

LADY FOLNIER CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO NEGOTIATE AN ALLIANCE WITH US A FEW DAYS BACK, RIGHT?
IF ONLY I COULD AGREE AT THAT TIME, THIS WON'T BE...
ISN'T THERE ANY WAY TO AVOID THIS BATTLE?

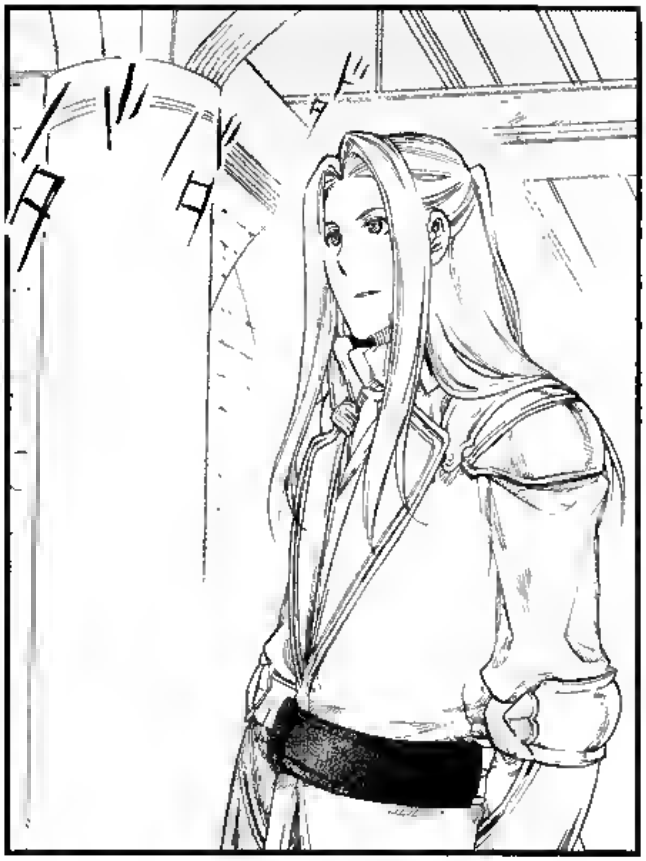
LISTEN WELL, LITTLE ONE.
THE BASIS OF DIPLOMACY IS ABOUT SELLING YOURSELF AS HIGH AS POSSIBLE.
YOU SAY THAT YOU WANTED AN ALLIANCE. IF WE APPEAR WEAK TO THEM, WE WOULD ONLY BE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.
INSTEAD, WE SHOULD MAKE THEM LOWER THEIR HEADS AND RELY MORE ON US. MAKING THAT HAPPEN WOULD BE THE MOST IDEAL SITUATION.


BUT THIS TIME, BOTH SAPHIR AND THE HOSTILE GROUP ARE OUR COMRADES.
CAN'T WE TRY REFORMING AND COMING UP WITH A NEW SUGGESTION FROM OUR SIDE?

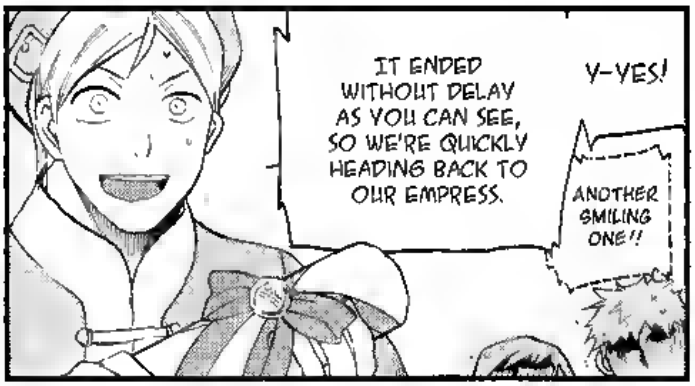
I GET WHERE YOU'RE COMING FROM, BUT THAT'S JUST IMPOS-SIBLE.

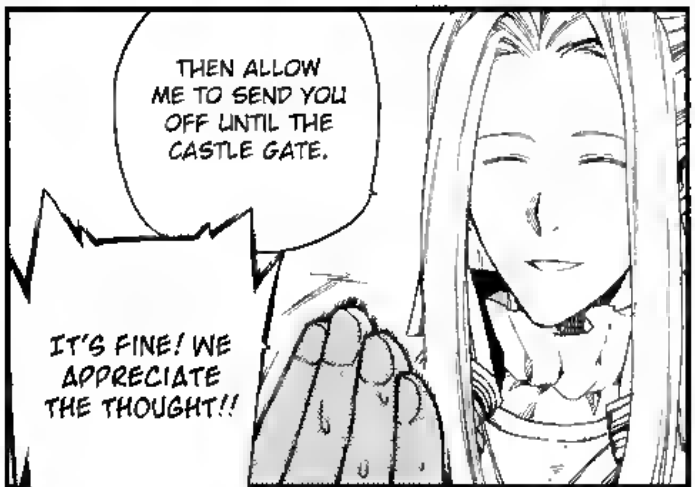
BUT HERE IS WHERE THE PROBLEM COMES IN.
"WE ARE NOT GOING TO OVERLOOK THE INVASION OF OUR HOMELAND."
"WE WANT AN ALLIANCE."
BEING US, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE BEST FOR US TO PICK?
.....
STOP SHANDRIS' INVASION.
IF WE DISPLAY OUR ABILITY TO PULL THAT OFF, THEY WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE US AND EVEN OFFER TO FORM AN ALLIANCE WITH US.
SO IT'S DECIDED THEN.


HII!?
IS THE AUDIENCE OVER ALREADY?
MR. MESSENGERS!



OH PLEASE ALLOW ME.
IT'S MY WAY OF APOLOGIZING FOR BEING ABSENT DURING THE AUDIENCE.


IT ENDED WITHOUT DELAY AS YOU CAN SEE, SO WE'RE QUICKLY HEADING BACK TO OUR EMPRESS.
Y-YES!
ANOTHER SMILING ONE!!

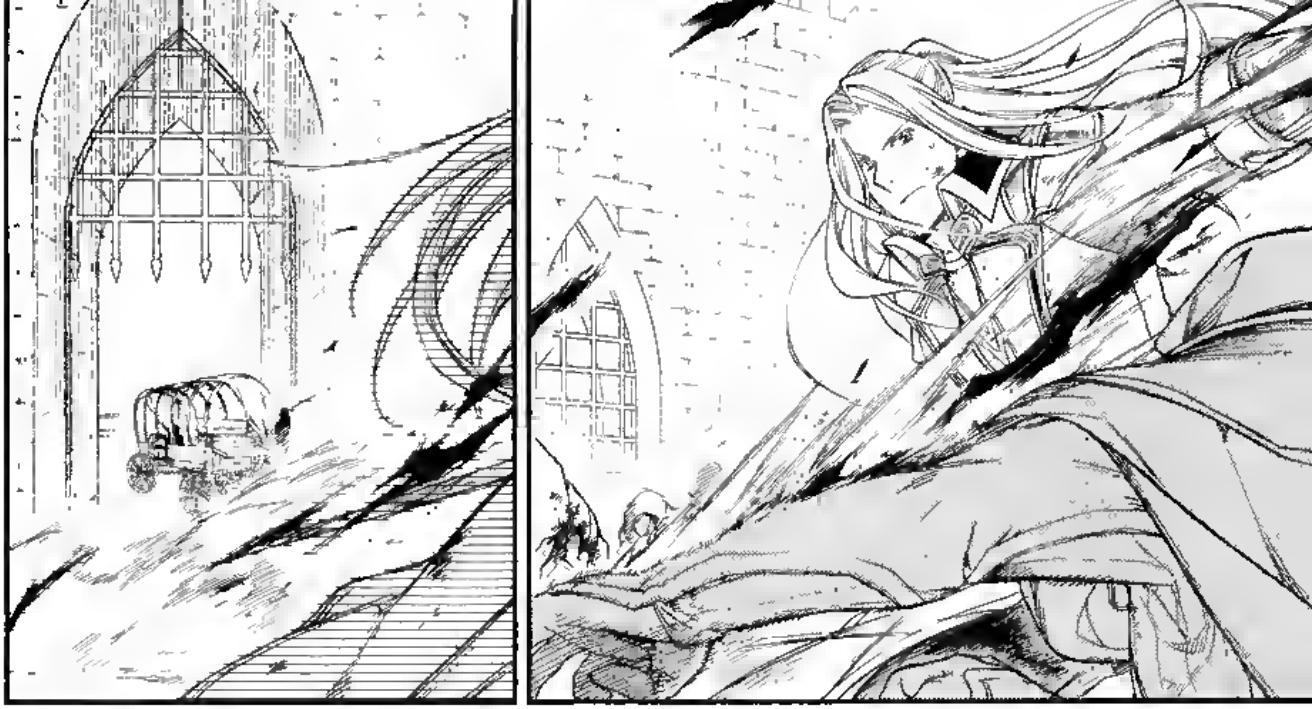

THEN ALLOW ME TO SEND YOU OFF UNTIL THE CASTLE GATE.
IT'S FINE! WE APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT!!

I TOLD YOU THAT YOU CAN'T PASS, DIDN'T I?
IN THE CASE OF SUBSTITUTION, ONE WOULD REQUIRE THE APPROVAL OF THE FORMER ONE...
IT'S JUST THAT THIS IS A DIFFERENT GUY FROM THE USUAL VEGETABLE SELLER THAT COMES HERE.
IT'S NOTHING MUCH, BUT...
IS THERE SOME KIND OF TROUBLE?
ME ...
WITH ...
I JUST HAPPENED TO FORGOT TO BRING IT ...
I REALLY HAVE DONE THAT ALREADY.

I WANT THOSE GUYS!!
KILL THEM!!
TAKE COVER !!

KU ...
I'LL HOLD THEM BACK.
GET BACK TO THE CASTLE.
I WANT HALF THE SENTRIES TO ACCOMPANY THE CHIEF ENVOY BACK!
YES SIR!

A WHIS-TLE!?
THE CASTLE GATE!



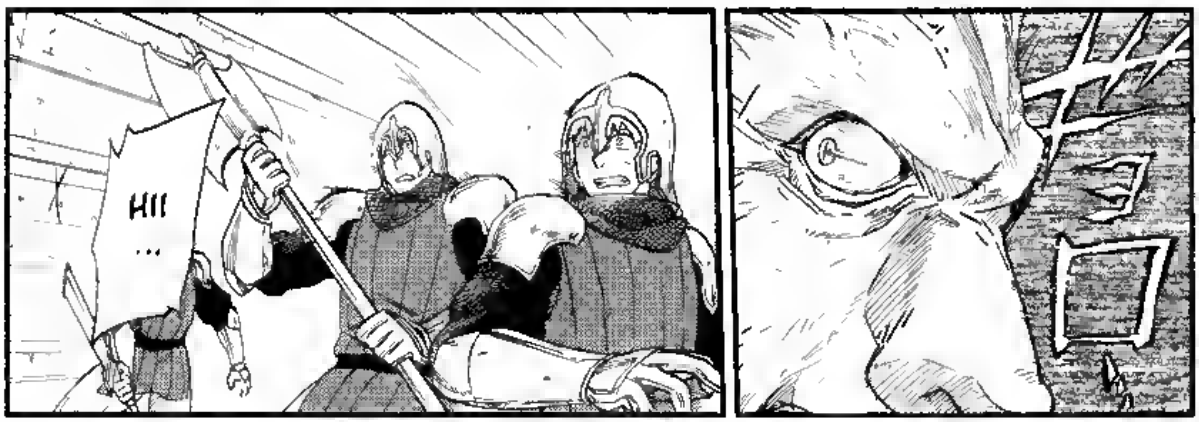
THAT GUY ...
IS IN THE WAY.

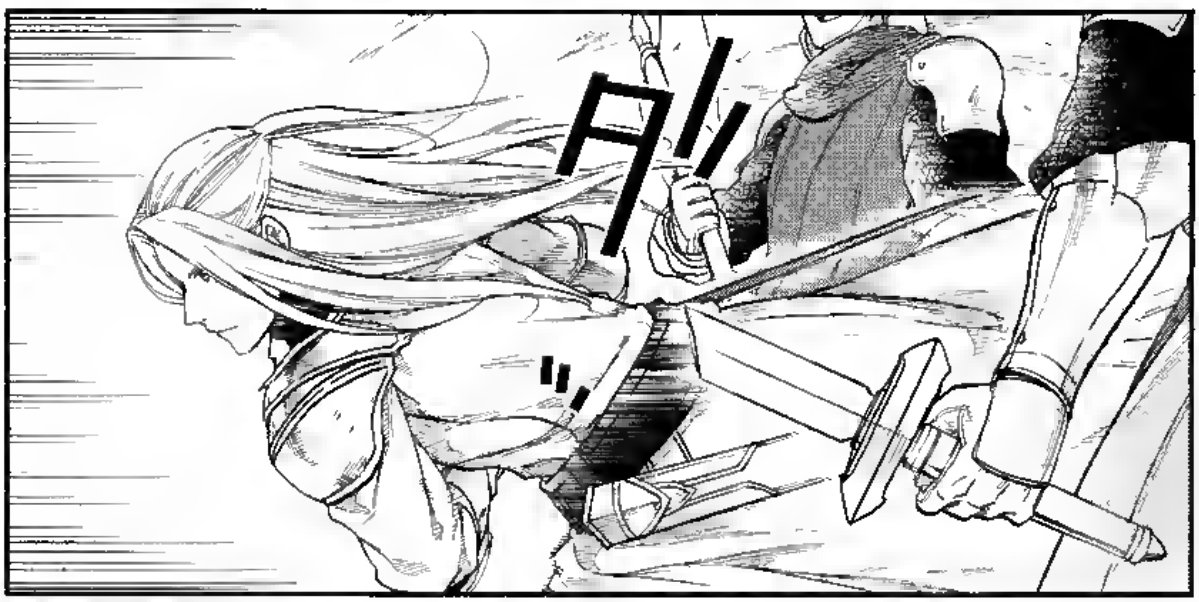
HE'S PRETTY SKILLED.
HE DISABLED THEM INSTEAD OF KILLING THEM SO THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO FIND OUT THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THIS.

I HAVE TONS OF QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU GUYS.
BRING IT ON.
AND THE ONE HIDING INSIDE AS WELL.
I'LL BE YOUR OPPONENT.

AN OGRE ...!?
Y-YOU MONSTER!!

WHA
...
THE BLADES !?

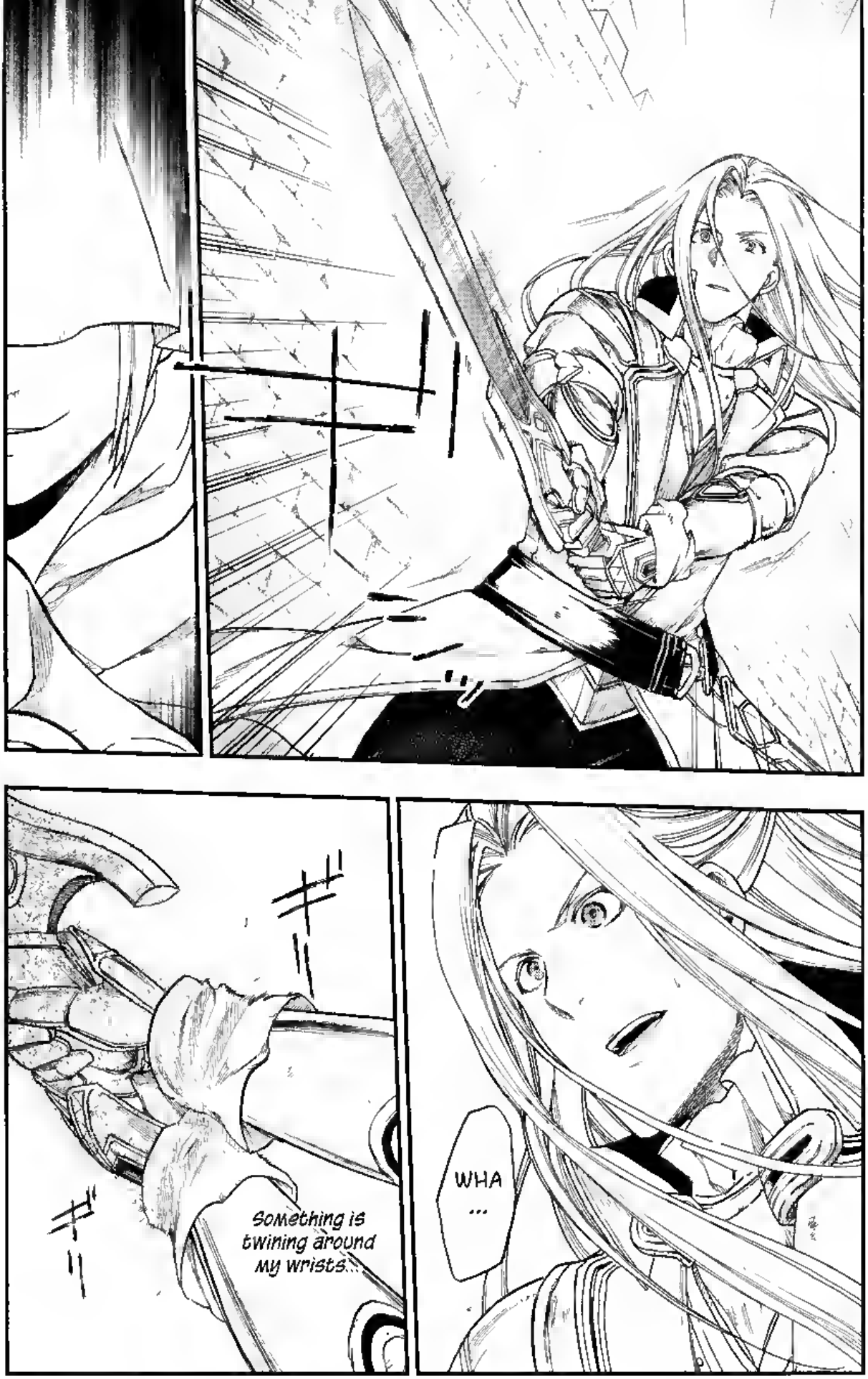

HII
...
ギョロ


ドル

Even if normal blades don't work ...

This demon sword will...

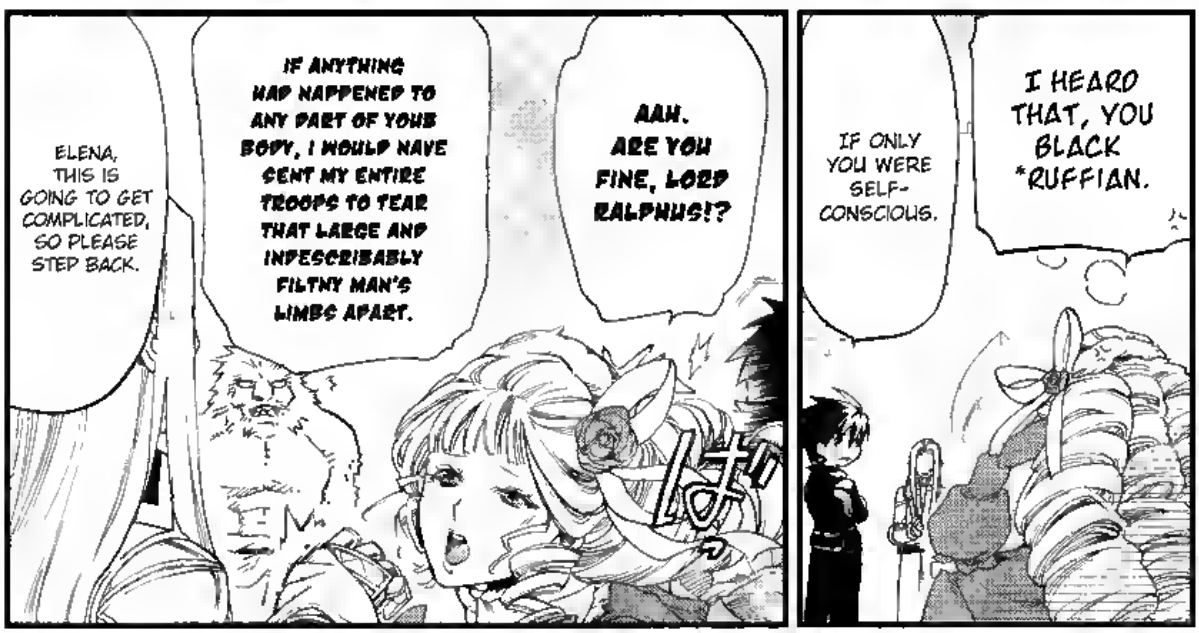
I WON'T LET YOU.


WHA
...
Something is twining around my wrists...

I DIDN'T COME HERE TO SEE YOU.
PLEASE QUIET DOWN, MR. KNIGHT.

WHO'S THERE!?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "WHO" WHEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ENTERED OUR TERRITORIES SO RUDELY?
JUST LIKE THAT (SELF-PROCLAIMED) FIANCEE OUR RECENT GUESTS HAVE BEEN NOTHING BUT TROUBLE.
ANOTHER ONE WHO RAMPAGES AND DOES AS SHE PLEASES IN ANOTHER PERSON'S HOUSE.


ELENA, THIS IS GOING TO GET COMPLICATED, SO PLEASE STEP BACK.
IF ANYTHING HAD HAPPENED TO ANY PART OF YOUR BODY, I WOULD HAVE SENT MY ENTIRE TROOPS TO TEAR THAT LARGE AND INDESCRIBABLY FILTHY MAN'S LIMBS APART.
AAH. ARE YOU FINE, LORD RALPHUS!?
IF ONLY YOU WERE SELF-CONSCIOUS.
I HEARD THAT, YOU BLACK *RUFFIAN.

*The exact term used refers to an uncivilized person who pillages and destroys other people's houses

MY BAD, RAIN. THAT WAS A MISTAKE ON MY PART.
ASIDE FROM THE CHIEF ENVOY, THE OTHER MESSENGERS ARE DEAD.
YOUR BAD HABIT IS THAT YOU LIKE TO TAKE ALL THE BLAME TO YOURSELF.
IF I GO ACCORDING TO YOUR REASONING, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO SEND THE MESSENGERS OFF UNTIL THE GATE WOULD BE MINE.

BUT THE ONES THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY AT FAULT WOULD BE THESE GUYS, RIGHT?

I WILL DEFINITELY MAKE YOU BEAR THE RESPON-SIBILITY...
FOR KILLING THE GUESTS IN MY HOUSE.

Announcement

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We've been forced to move to a new domain because of complications. We're now at:

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Please note the lack of a hypen in our new URL.

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CHAPTER 21
THE MELANCHOLY OF JOE RAMBERG

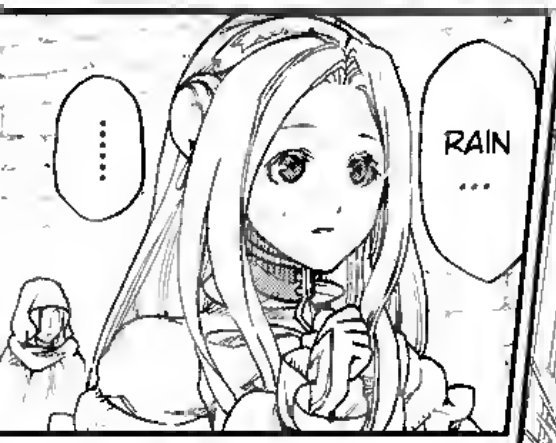
JUDGING FROM HIS PHYSIQUE, IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S A MANSERVANT WHO HAD RECEIVED POWER.
BY PLANTING SOME SORT OF MATTER INTO A HUMAN BEING, HE WAS BESTOWED BESTIAL POWER.
I'VE MET THIS KIND OF CREATURE A LONG TIME AGO, DURING MY JOURNEY.

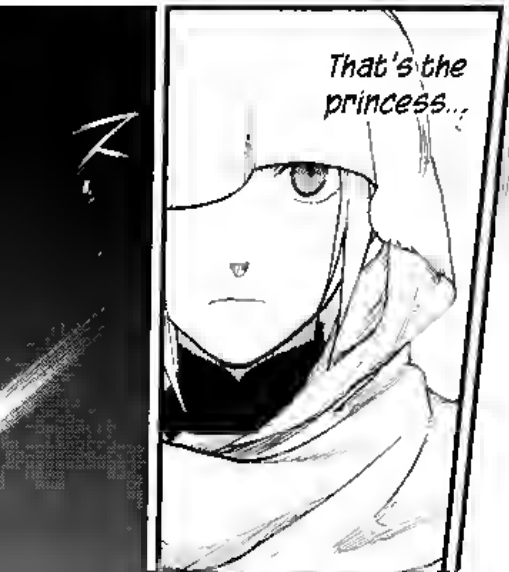
35 POINTS.
WITH SUCH A STURDY BODY, YOUR SPEED WOULD PROBABLY BE COMPROMISED.
HMPH.
IT TALKED...!?
DON'T INTERFERE, TALMA.
OKAY, OKAY.
IT'LL BE BAD IF I WERE TO BE JUDGED ONLY FROM USING THAT EXTENT OF POWER AFTER ALL.
HE CAN STILL TRANSFORM!!

I'LL LEAVE THE PRINCESS AND THE CHIEF ENVOY TO YOU GUYS.
ROGER.

AT BEST, YOU CAN ONLY BABBLE.
I'LL ADD 5 POINTS. THAT'LL MAKE IT 40 POINTS.
LOOKS LIKE YOUR SKILL IS PRETTY POLISHED, SEEING THAT YOU COULD TRANSFORM TWICE.
RAIN ...
YOU'RE THE ONLY STRONG PERSON THAT ACTUALLY CONCERNED MY MASTER AND US.
LET'S SEE IF YOU'RE WORTH OUR CONCERN!
GEN-ERAL!
JUST NOW, YOUR SWORD!

I DON'T NEED IT.
I HAVE TO DO THIS IF I WANT A CONTEST OF STRENGTH


RAIN ...
.....


That's the princess...

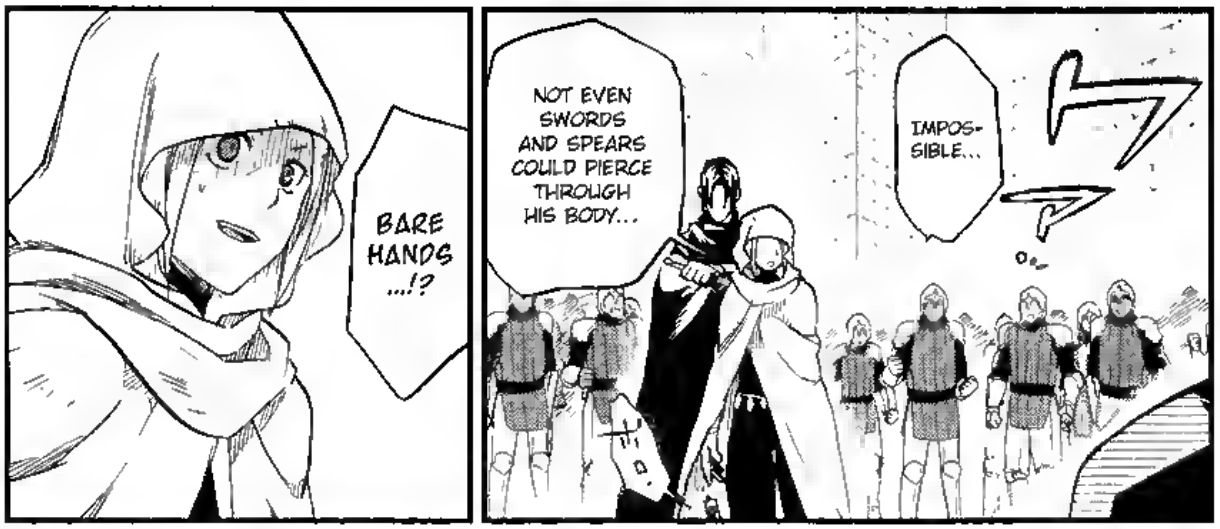
EH
...
I WASN'T EVEN PLANNING TO DO ANYTHING.
I JUST WANTED TO SEE THE REAL THING!
WELL, THEY DID GO A LITTLE OVERBOARD.
AND, WELL, YEAH, I DID PARTICIPATE IN THAT A LITTLE, BUT ...

MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...
IS IT REALLY FINE LEAVING HIM LIKE THAT?
WELL, I ONLY HAVE TWO QUESTIONS FOR YOU.
DID YOU BECOME A SERVANT OF YOUR OWN WILL?
WHAT'S WRONG? HAS YOUR CHATTINESS DISAPPEARED SOMEWHERE?
WHAT A FOOLISH QUESTION.
I SEE ...
NEXT THEN ...
OF COURSE.
IT WAS MY DESIRE.

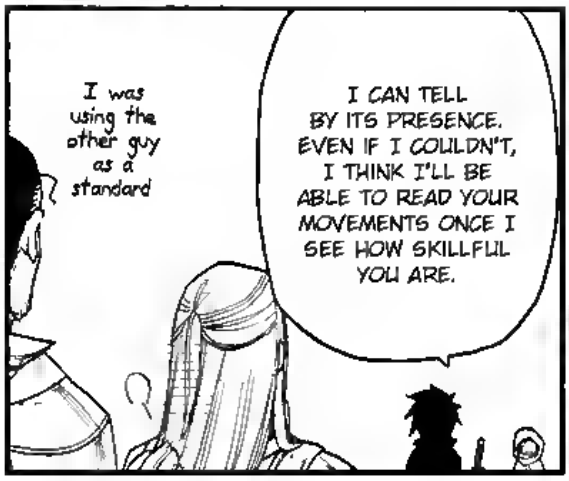
GA
...
!!?
DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN WIN AGAINST THE STRENGTH OF A DRAGON?
IMPOS-SIBLE!
THE MASTER SAID THAT IT WAS JUST A RUMOUR!!
HOW COULD A DRAGON SLAYER ...
POSSIBLY EXIST...

YOU KNOW ...
IT DOES.

WHAT.
YOU WERE JUST TALKING TRASH.


BARE HANDS ...!?
NOT EVEN SWORDS AND SPEARS COULD PIERCE THROUGH HIS BODY...
IMPOS-SIBLE...

IS THIS AN INVI-SIBLE WHIP?
A PRETTY INTERESTING MAGICAL TOOL, ISN'T IT?
ARE YOU NEXT?


I was using the other guy as a standard
I CAN TELL BY ITS PRESENCE. EVEN IF I COULDN'T, I THINK I'LL BE ABLE TO READ YOUR MOVEMENTS ONCE I SEE HOW SKILLFUL YOU ARE.

NO?
DON'T TELL ME...YOU CAN SEE IT!?
Pretty sturdy

SINCE YOU MUST HAVE TAKEN GREAT PAINS TO COME AND SEE US MULTIPLE TIMES,
WHY DON'T WE TRYING HAVING A BOUT HERE?

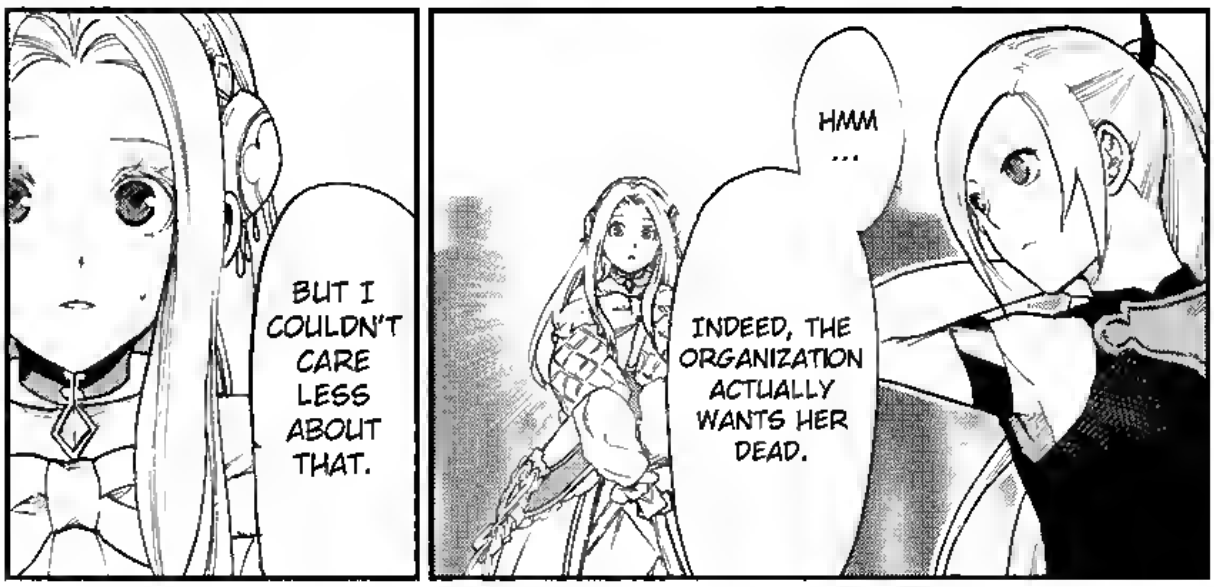
DURING THE PARADE.
AND THE TIME WE MET JOE AND THE REST.

SINCE I'M FOUND OUT, I HAVE NO CHOICE.

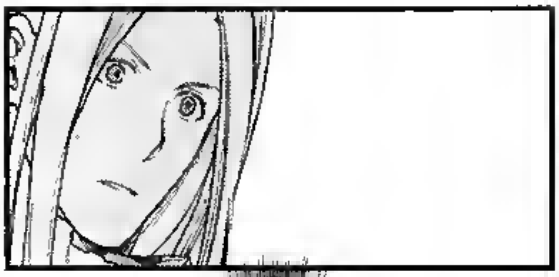
... WHAT ...

PLEASE!
LET ME OFF!!
I DIDN'T KILL EVEN A SINGLE PERSON!
YOU...EVEN AFTER YOUR SERVANT HAS BEEN KILLED... HOW SHAMELESS ...

THE SCHEME TO PROVOKE DISCORD WITH SYANDRYS IS AN UTTER FAILURE!
THE CHIEF ENVOY IS STILL ALIVE AND EVEN THE LETTER IS IN PERFECT CONDITION.
LOOK.
EVEN MY WEAPON HAS BEEN CONFISCATED SO I'M UNARMED NOW...
NO?
EVEN IF I LET YOU GO RIGHT NOW, YOU'LL STILL RETURN TO FULFILL YOUR ORIGINAL PURPOSE, WON'T YOU?
OF COURSE!


BUT I COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT THAT.
HMM ...
INDEED, THE ORGANIZATION ACTUALLY WANTS HER DEAD.

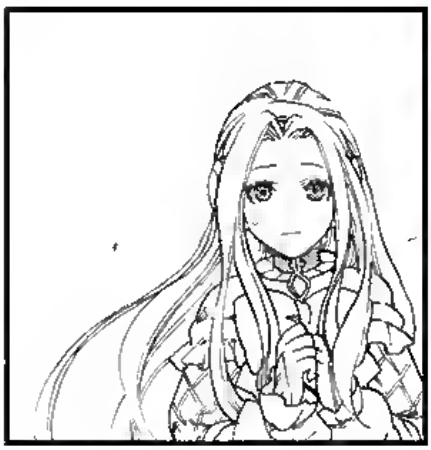
THOSE GUYS ONLY CAME HERE BECAUSE THEY WANTED TO TAKE A LOOK AT HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE.
WELL, AND IT'S BECAUSE YOU WENT AND ARGUED WITH THAT INVINCIBLE GENERAL, THE RESULT WAS AS EXPECTED.
AH.
AND THAT KNIGHT WITH THE FOREHEAD DID INTERFERE WITH US A LITTLE.
EVEN IF YOU HADN'T DONE THAT, IT LOOKS LIKE HE WOULD HAVE CLEANED UP EVERYTHING BY HIMSELF ANYWAY.
WHAT A TALKATIVE ASSASSIN.
WHY, THANK YOU FOR THAT.
AND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. YOU'LL BE TELLING US EVERYTHING FROM THE BEGINNING TILL THE END, WON'T YOU?
IN JAIL, THAT IS.
THAT'S A LITTLE IMPOS-SIBLE-

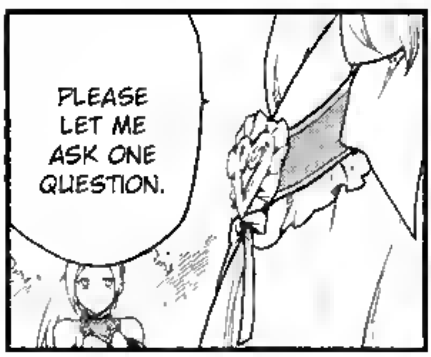


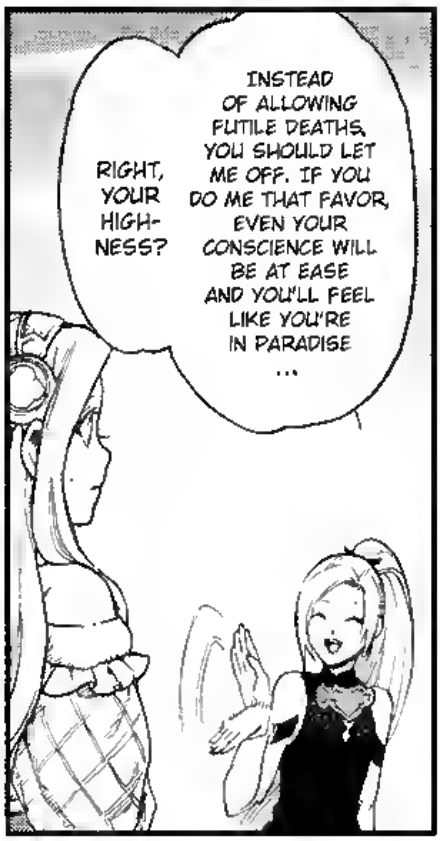
Poison!

SO YOU TOO ...

I'LL DIE BEFORE I CAN EVEN TALK.




PLEASE LET ME ASK ONE QUESTION.


RIGHT, YOUR HIGH-NESS?
INSTEAD OF ALLOWING FUTILE DEATHS, YOU SHOULD LET ME OFF. IF YOU DO ME THAT FAVOR, EVEN YOUR CONSCIENCE WILL BE AT EASE AND YOU'LL FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN PARADISE ...

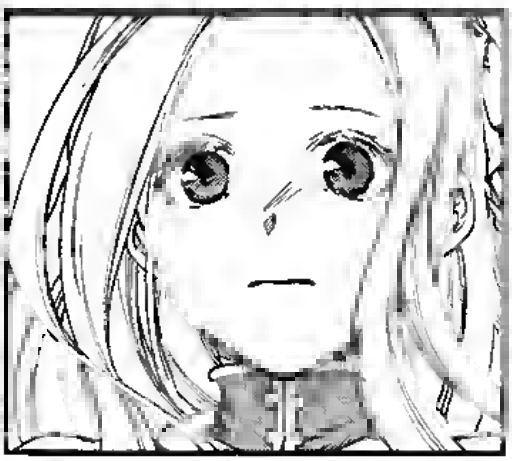
SINCE IT'S PREPARED INSIDE OUR BODY, THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN PREVENT SUICIDE.

WHY AM I BEING TARGETED?

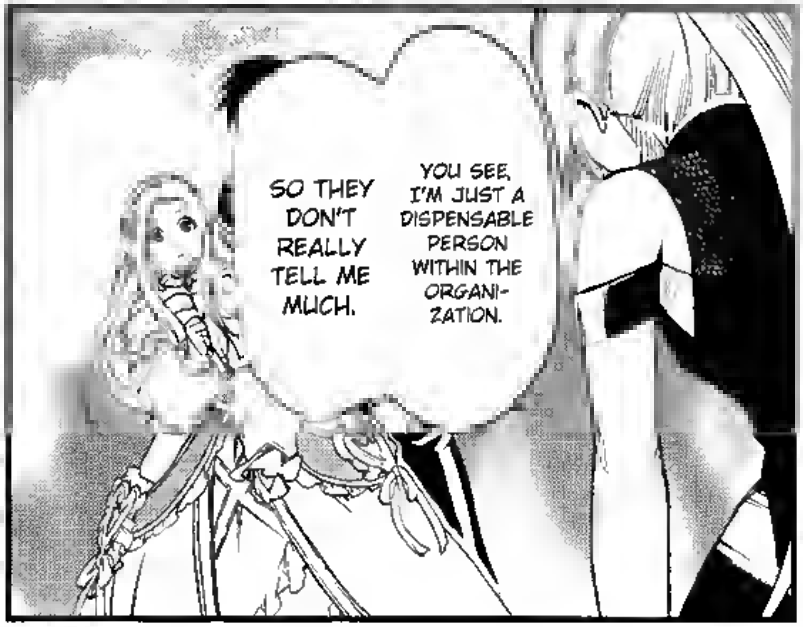
PRINCESS ...
IS IT BECAUSE I'M THE HEIR TO THE THRONE?
DO YOU HAVE A GRUDGE AGAINST THE ROYAL FAMILY?
OR IS IT BE-CAUSE ...
THERE IS AN IMPORTANT REASON AS TO WHY I HAVE TO DIE.

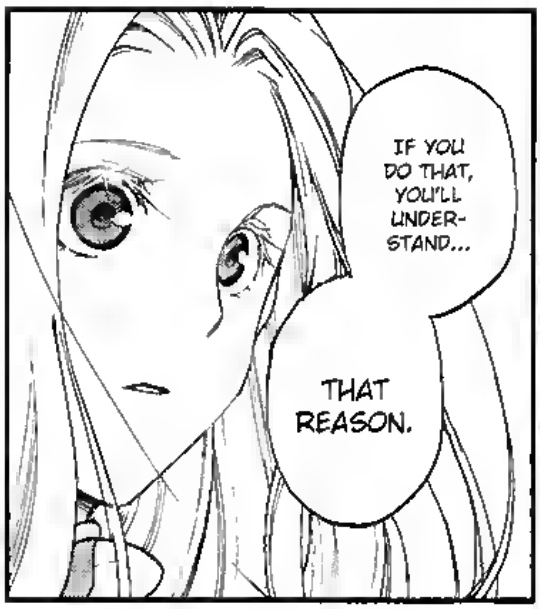
IF I LET YOU OFF RIGHT HERE ...
WOULD YOU TELL ME EVERY-THING?

I SEE.
SO EVEN THE REAL PERSON DOESN'T KNOW.



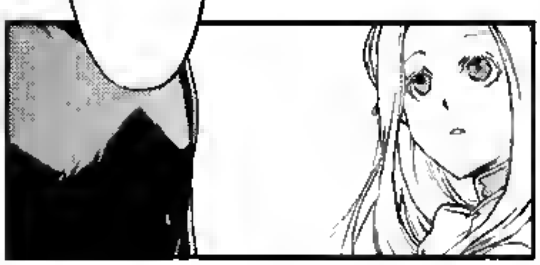
THAT'S WHY I CAN ONLY SAY THIS MUCH.


SO THEY DON'T REALLY TELL ME MUCH.
YOU SEE, I'M JUST A DISPENSABLE PERSON WITHIN THE ORGANI-ZATION.


IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL UNDER-STAND...
THAT REASON.

IF YOU WERE REALLY THAT SHARP, YOU SHOULD HAVE SENSED SOMETHING, SHOULDN'T YOU?

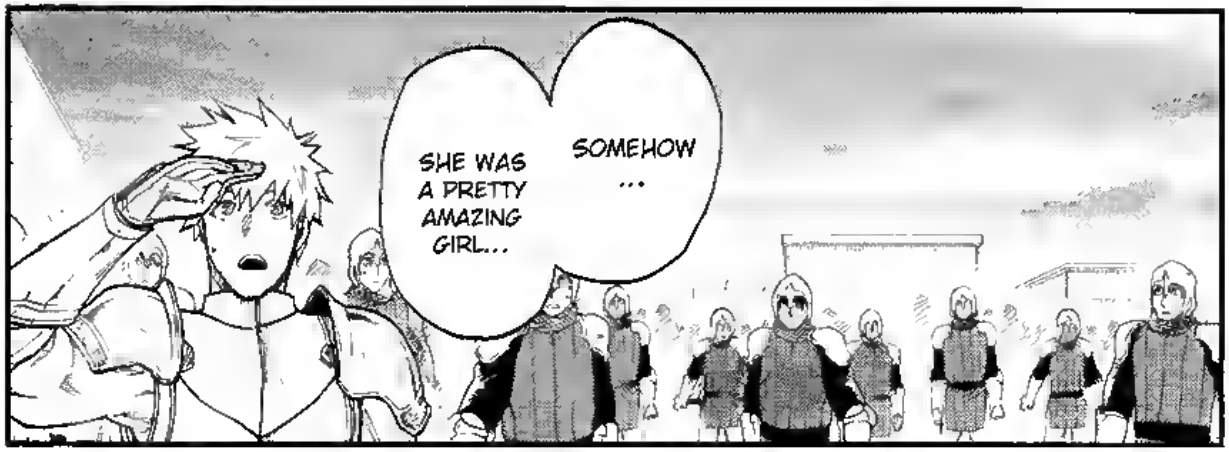
WHO KNOWS ...



TRY SEARCHING GALFORT CASTLE MORE CAREFULLY.

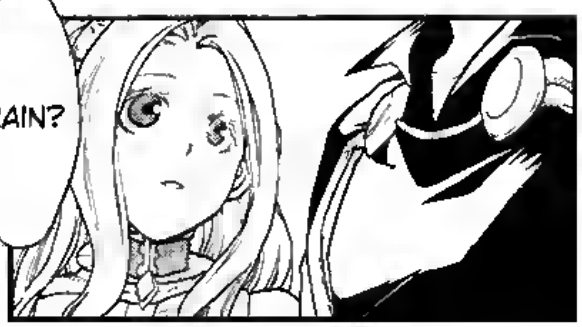
"EXTEND"!!
HMM?
WELL, TRY YOUR BEST! HOPE YOU'LL GET BACK YOUR CASTLE SOON.

I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THIS BEING A WHIP!
HAHA! WERE YOU SURPRISED?
I'M GOING TO TRY TALKING TO THE SUPERIORS ABOUT THIS ATTACK, JUST IN CASE.
GOODBYE-
HAVING SAID THAT, SUPPOSE I REPORT WHATEVER HAPPENED TODAY, THEY WOULD PROBABLY CUT THE PRETENSE OF FIRING ALL THESE USELESS BULLETS, YOU KNOW?


SOMEHOW ...
SHE WAS A PRETTY AMAZING GIRL...

HM?
AAH.

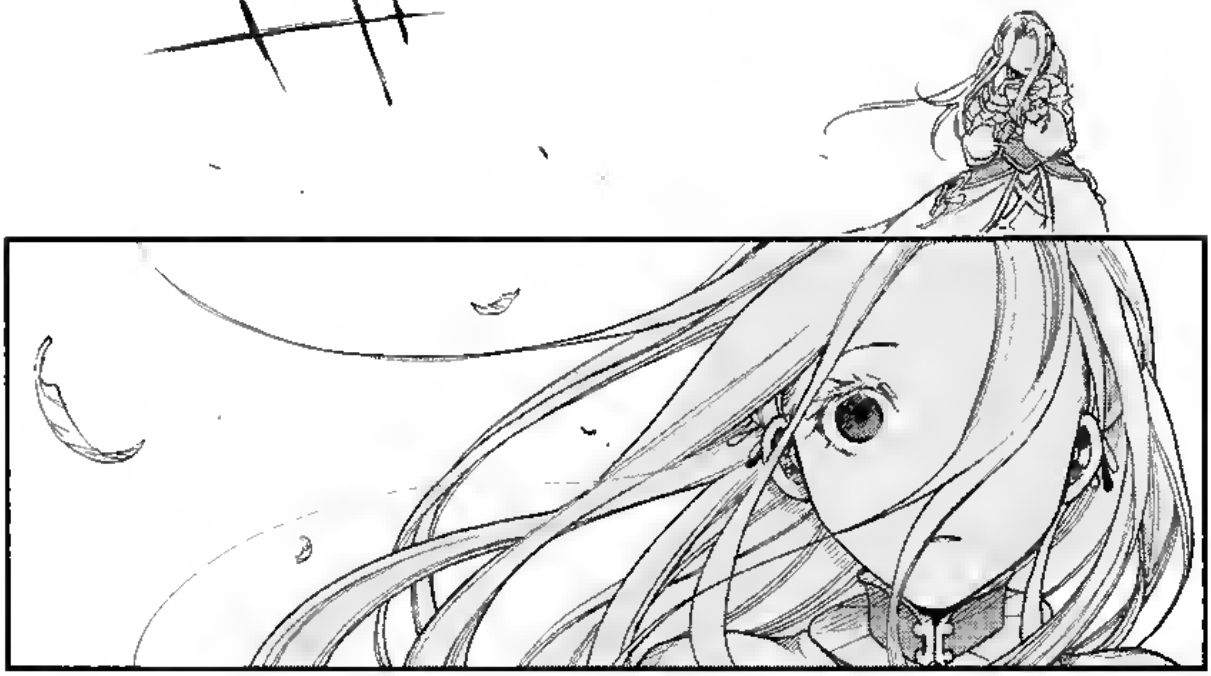
Galport

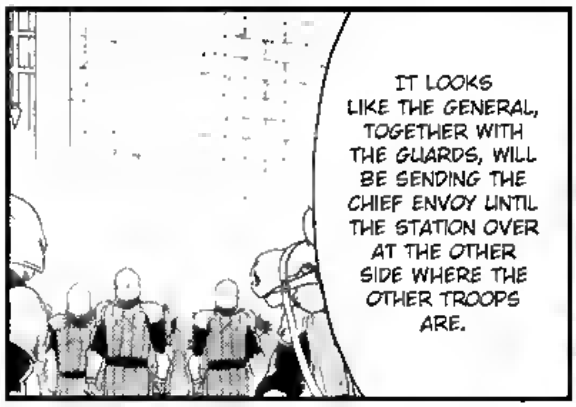

RAIN?

.....

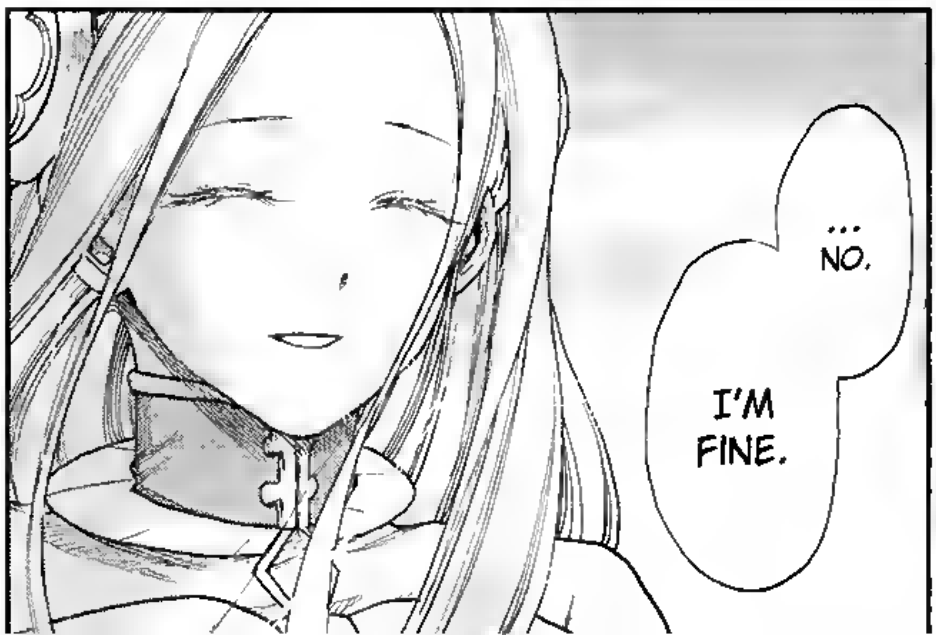
I'LL BE SENDING THE CHIEF ENVOY FOR NOW THEN.

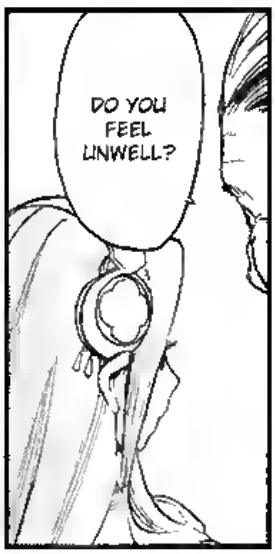
THIS TIME ROUND, I WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT WAS BEING TARGETED.
SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

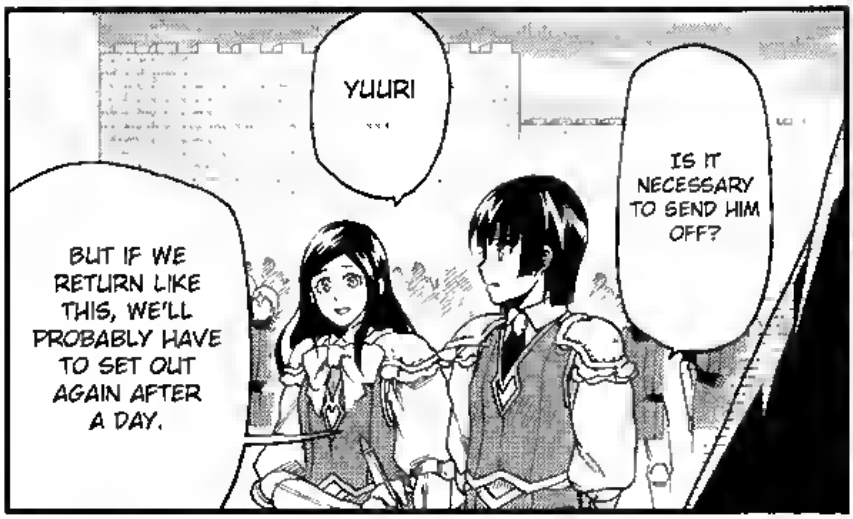



IT LOOKS LIKE THE GENERAL, TOGETHER WITH THE GUARDS, WILL BE SENDING THE CHIEF ENVOY UNTIL THE STATION OVER AT THE OTHER SIDE WHERE THE OTHER TROOPS ARE.

YOUR HIGH-NESS!
WE SHOULD GET BACK TO THE CASTLE QUICKLY...

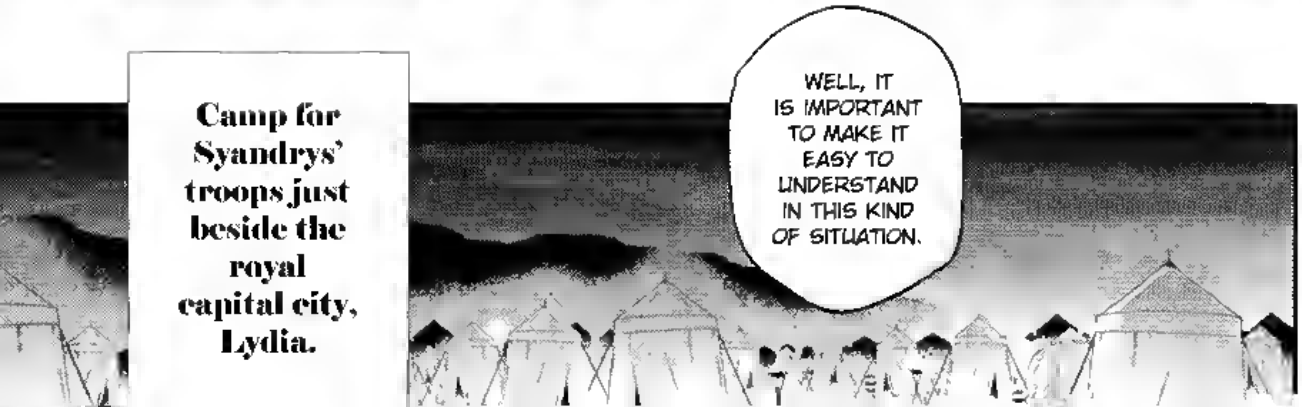

... NO.
I'M FINE.


DO YOU FEEL UNWELL?

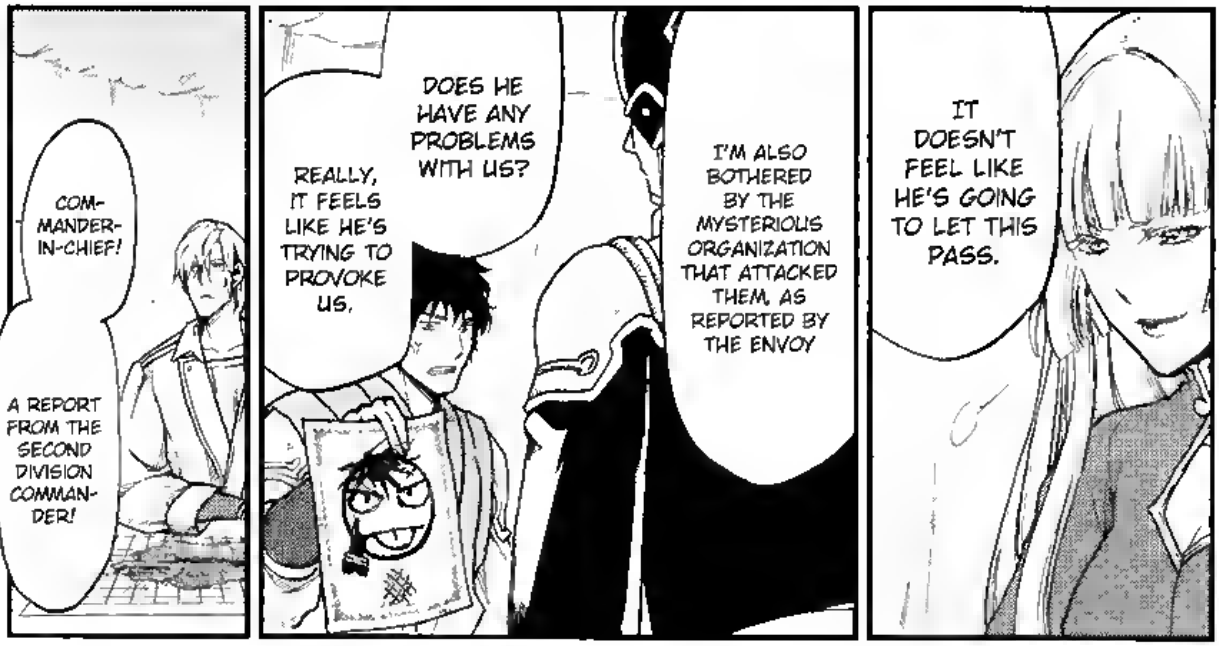


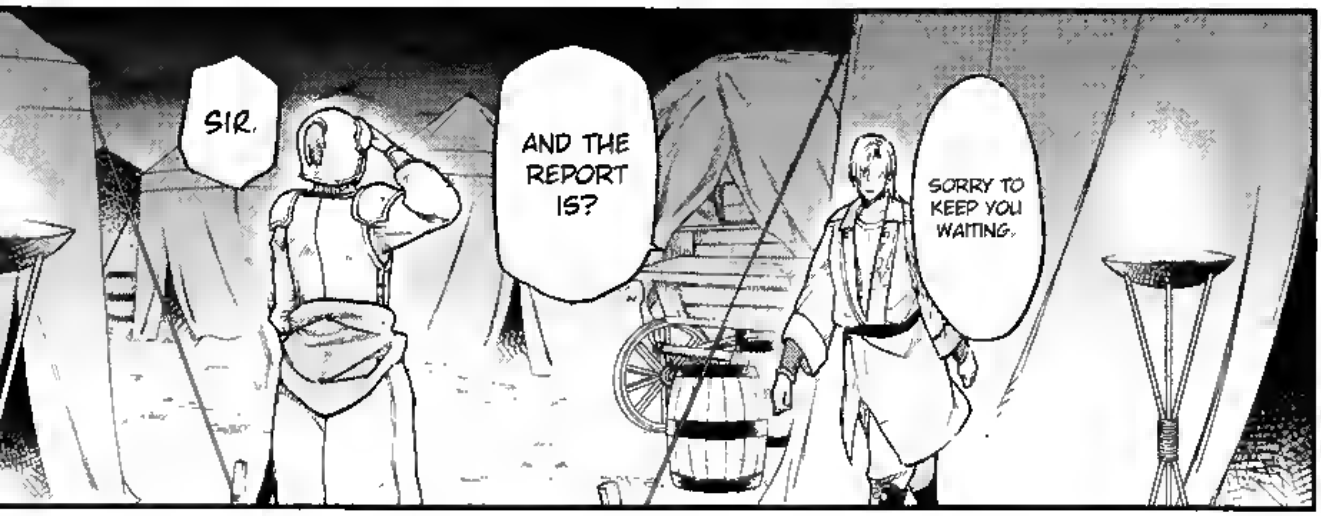
WHAT!?
CAPTAIN, YOU'RE THE ONE BEING LOUD OVER HERE...
DON'T YOU DARE LEAK ANY PART OF OUR STRATEGY WHEN OUR ENEMIES ARE NEARBY, YOU IDIOT!

Camp for Syandrys' troops just beside the royal capital city, Lydia.



W...WHAT A NOVEL ANSWER, EH JOE?
NO, IT'S JUST HIM.
HE'S FEIGNING IT WITH GRAFFITI, BUT IN TRUTH, THERE MUST BE A DEEP MEANING BEHIND...
THERE ISN'T.


IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE HE'S GOING TO LET THIS PASS.
I'M ALSO BOTHERED BY THE MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION THAT ATTACKED THEM, AS REPORTED BY THE ENVOY
DOES HE HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH US?
REALLY, IT FEELS LIKE HE'S TRYING TO PROVOKE US.
COM-MANDER-IN-CHIEF!
A REPORT FROM THE SECOND DIVISION COMMAN-DER!


SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
AND THE REPORT IS?
SIR.

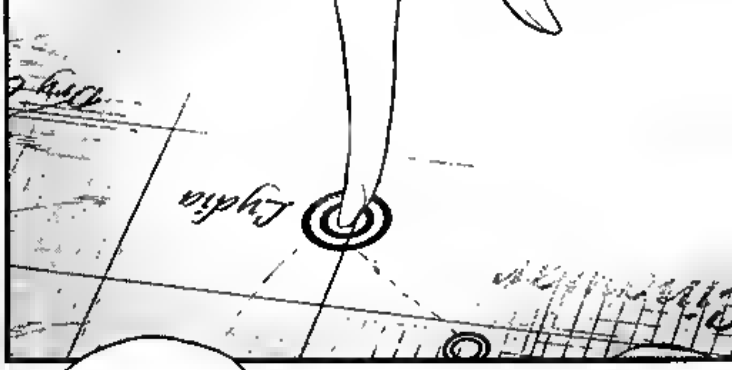
YOU DIDN'T SEND ONE TO SAPHIR?
NO, SIR. I'M SORRY.
I THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE MUCH MORE FORMIDABLE OPPONENTS ...
BASED ON PERSONAL JUDGMENT, AFTER CROSSING THE BORDER, I DISPATCHED A SPY TO THE AREA WHERE PRINCESS SHELFA IS.
HE'S NOT COMING BACK.
YOU MADE THE RIGHT JUDGMENT.
AND?
...I UNDERSTAND.
THANKS.
YES SIR.
I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE.
I'M AFRAID THEY MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOUND OUT AND ELIMINATED.

SO GETTING FOUND OUT BY RAIN WOULD MEAN THAT WE MIGHT HAVE TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEMATIC SCHEME HE WOULD COME UP WITH TO OPPOSE US, HUH.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
IF WE DIVIDE OUR TROOPS ANY MORE FOR A SEARCH PARTY AND ENGAGE THE OTHER PARTY, THINGS WOULD ALSO GET WORSE, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT...WE DON'T HAVE ANY INTENTION TO TURN HIM INTO THE ENEMY ANYWAY.
THOUGH THE OTHER SIDE IS BRIMMING WITH HOSTILITY.

JOE.
WE'RE MISSING SOME-THING!

THE ROYAL CAPITAL CITY, LYDIA, IS ALREADY RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR EYES AFTER ALL.


Lydia

WE'LL KILL SAPHIR AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE BEFORE TAKING GALFORT DOWN.
ISN'T THIS THE BEST METHOD TO ENSURE VICTORY?

THAT'S TRUE...
Lydia

Announcement

Sense Scans
www.sensescans.com
#Sense@irc.irchighway.net

We've been forced to move to a new domain because of complications. We're now at:

SENSESCANS.COM

Please note the lack of a hypen in our new URL.

RAIN
Sense Scans
www.sensescans.com
#Sense@irc.irchighway.net
Raws: Sense-Scans
Translator: zkein
Proofredder: Frogmage
Cleaner: li_er & Minty
Typesetter: li_er
Quality Checker: Revan
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1
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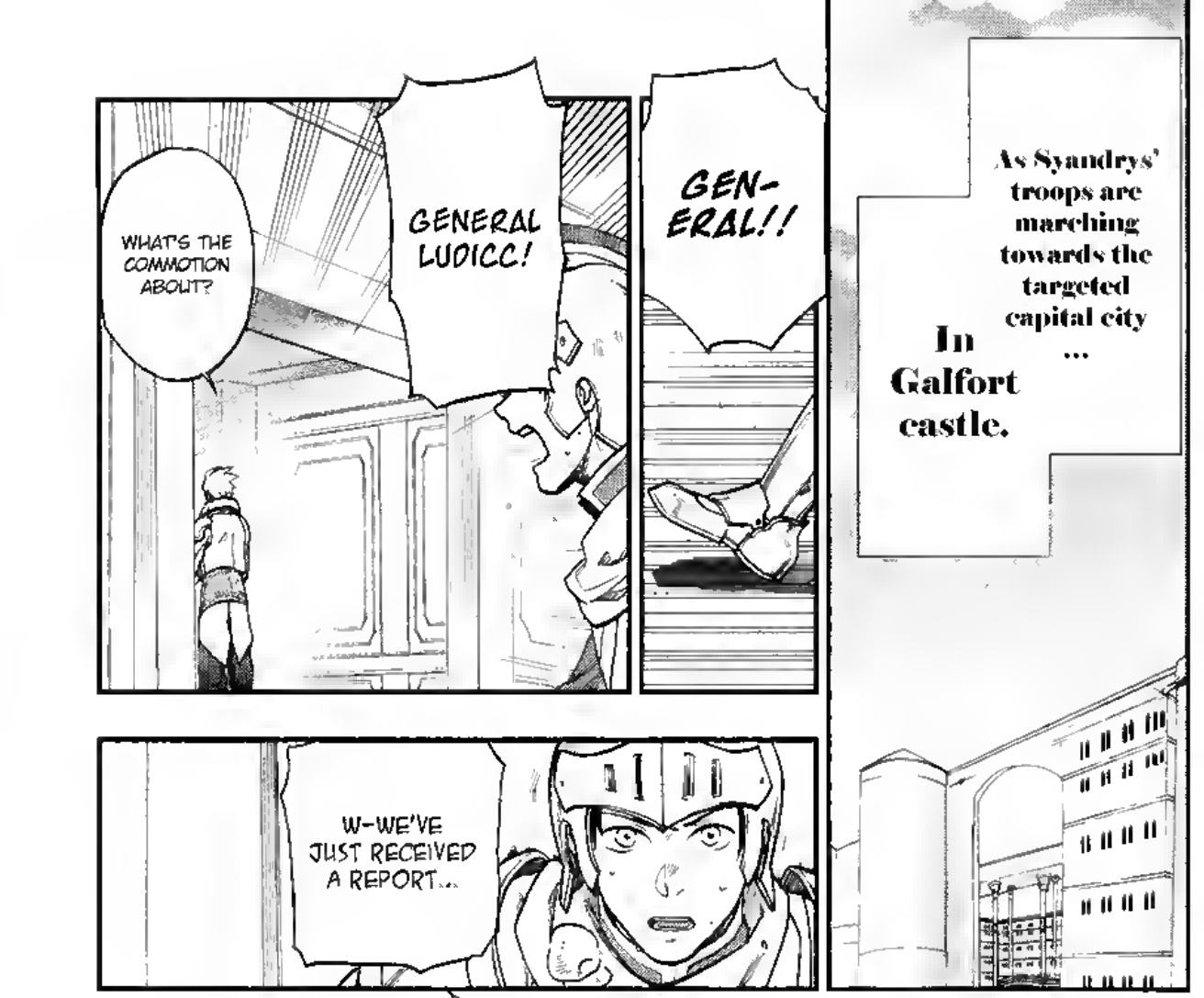
Translation Notes

Syandrys: zkein made a bit of a change from his original translation of the name "Shandris" to "Syandrys".
The extra pages in the last chapter of the volume revealed the English spellings for the names of some of the places in Rain, and apparently he got this one wrong.

We apologize for the inconsistency.


As Syandrys' troops are marching towards the targeted capital city ...
In Galfort castle.
GEN-ERAL!!
GENERAL LUDICC!
WHAT'S THE COMMOTION ABOUT?
W-WE'VE JUST RECEIVED A REPORT...

CHAPTER 22.
A THREE-WAY BATTLE.

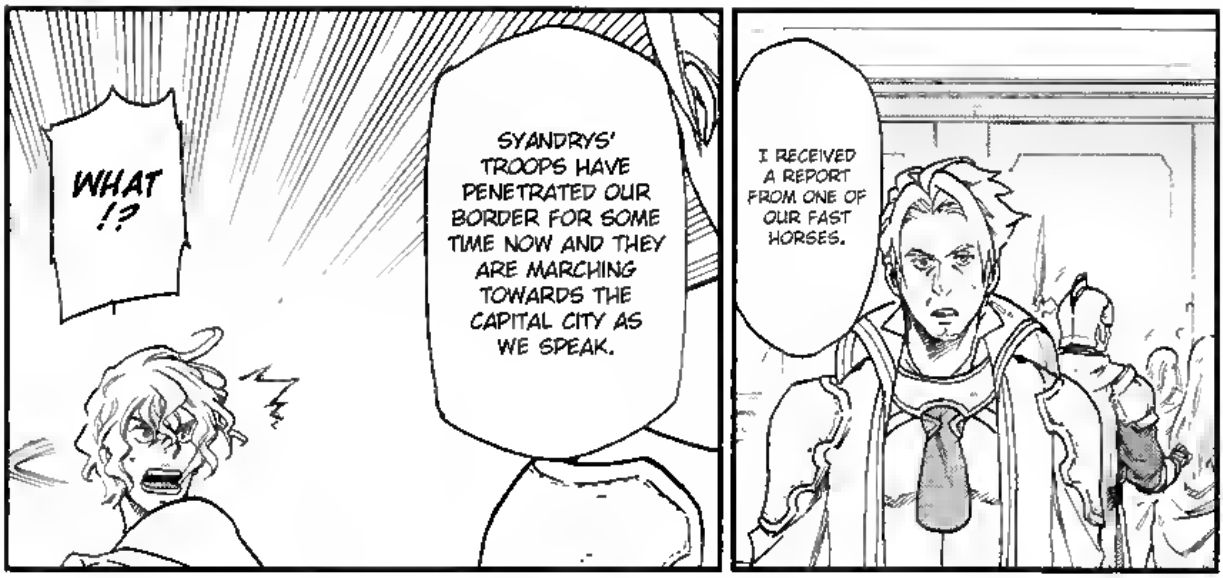
HEY, ISN'T HE...
THE RUMORED COMMANDING OFFICER OF A TROOP OF A HUNDRED... NO, A THOUSAND MEN, WHO HAD JUST BEEN PROMOTED.
HOW INDECENT OF HIM TO LOOK SO FLUSTERED.
WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE DID TO MAKE HIS MAJESTY PROMOTE HIM TO THIS LEVEL.
THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN STRICTER WITH THE PEOPLE WHO SEEK THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING A GENERAL.
Every single one of them...

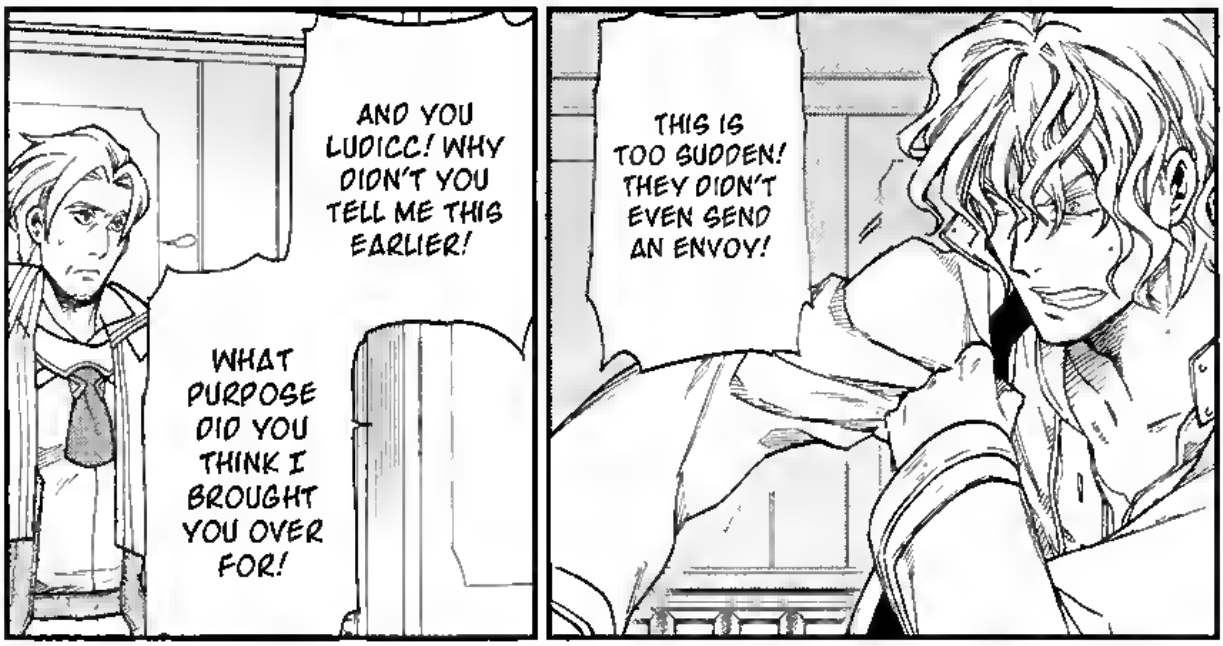
NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME!
HIS MAJESTY IS CURRENTLY RESTING...
WHAT TIME DO YOU THINK IT IS RIGHT NOW!!

IS HIS MAJESTY PRESENT !?
EEK !?

IT'S A STATE EMERGENCY!
IT'S NOT THE TIME TO BE SLEEPING LEISURELY!!
HMM?
HE'S AWAKE, ISN'T HE ...
Kyaa.. Stop ittt! Your Majestyy!!
Haha, this is so good! Come closer, will you!

MAJES-
TYYYYY!!
YOUR
Eek!?
W-W-
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
LUDICC!
HOW
DESPICABLE
OF YOU TO
INTERRUPT
YOUR
MASTER'S
LEISURE
TIME!
SUNKWOLL
IS ABOUT
TO PERISH
!!!
EH?


WHAT !?
SYANDRYS' TROOPS HAVE PENETRATED OUR BORDER FOR SOME TIME NOW AND THEY ARE MARCHING TOWARDS THE CAPITAL CITY AS WE SPEAK.
I RECEIVED A REPORT FROM ONE OF OUR FAST HORSES.


AND YOU LUDICC! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THIS EARLIER!
WHAT PURPOSE DID YOU THINK I BROUGHT YOU OVER FOR!
THIS IS TOO SUDDEN! THEY DIDN'T EVEN SEND AN ENVOY!

SO THAT WAS IT ...
THAT'S WHY, IF YOUR MAJESTY COULD JUST GIVE ME A DIRECT ORDER...
EVEN AFTER I BECAME THE COMMANDER OF A THOUSAND MEN, THE OTHER HIGHER-RANKING ARISTOCRATS STILL REFUSED TO LISTEN TO ME.
UNFOR-TUNATELY, BECAUSE MY ORIGINAL POSITION WAS JUST THAT OF A VISCOUNT ...

NO, I DIDN'T COME HERE WITH THE INTENTION OF GETTING SUCH...
THERE'S NO NEED TO HOLD BACK!

THEN HERE FORTH, I'LL PROMOTE YOUR STATUS TO THAT OF A COUNT.
!?

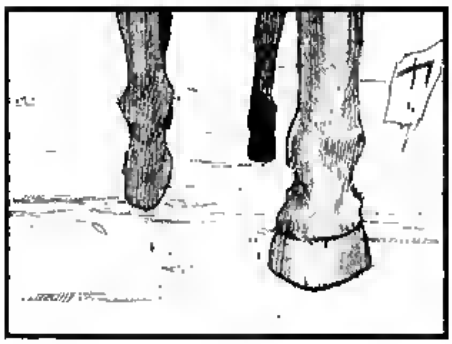
BUT ...
HMM? THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT FINANCES!

EVEN THOUGH THE ROYAL TREASURES HAVE BEEN STOLEN, I STILL HAVE A SUFFICIENT AMOUNT OF MONEY MYSELF!

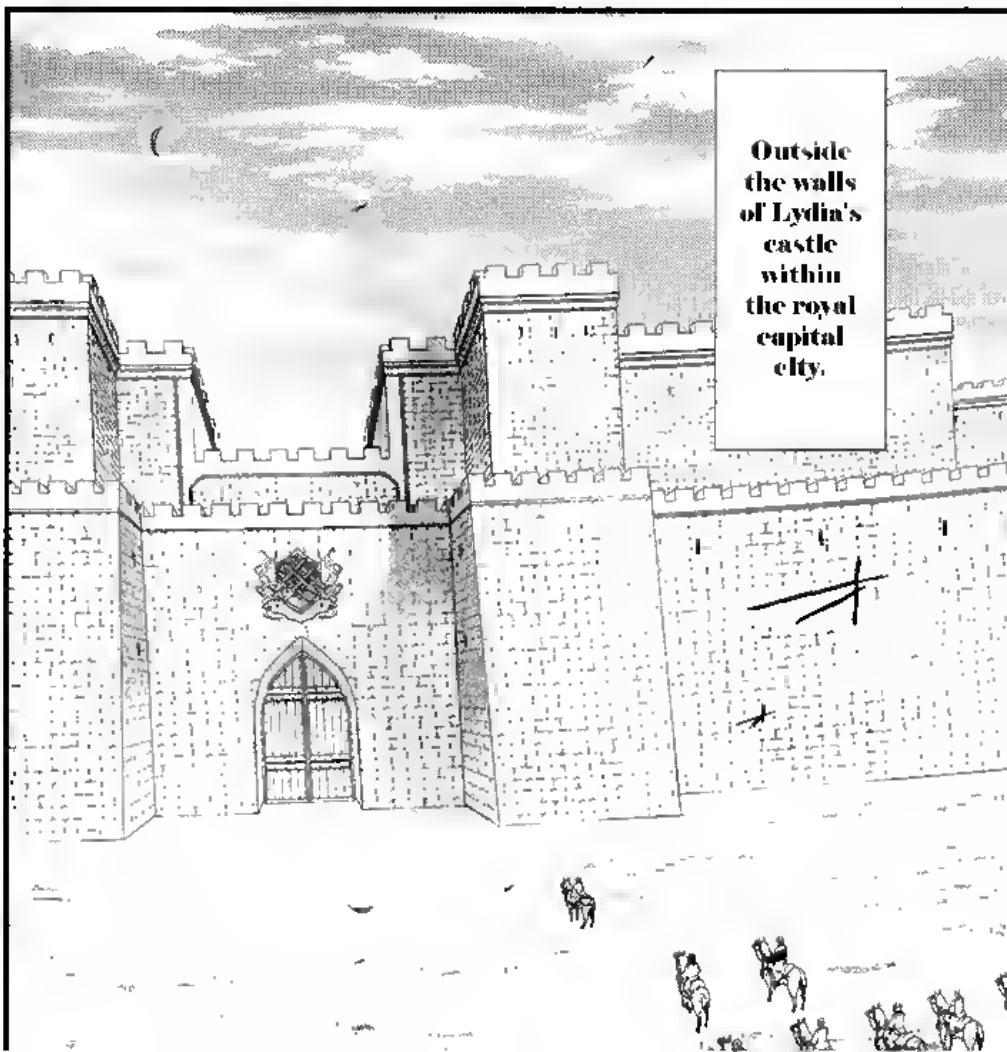
YOU ONLY NEED MONEY AND AUTHORITY TO CONTROL THE WORLD.
KNIGHTHOOD IS SUITABLE FOR SOMEONE OF YOUR CAPABILITY.

KEEP IT UP.
THIS WAY, YOU CAN COMMAND THEM TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.
NOW, THE WAR COUNCIL!
YEAH!
THANK YOU... VERY MUCH ...
Trust and merits of war alike...
can all be bought with money.
To this person...

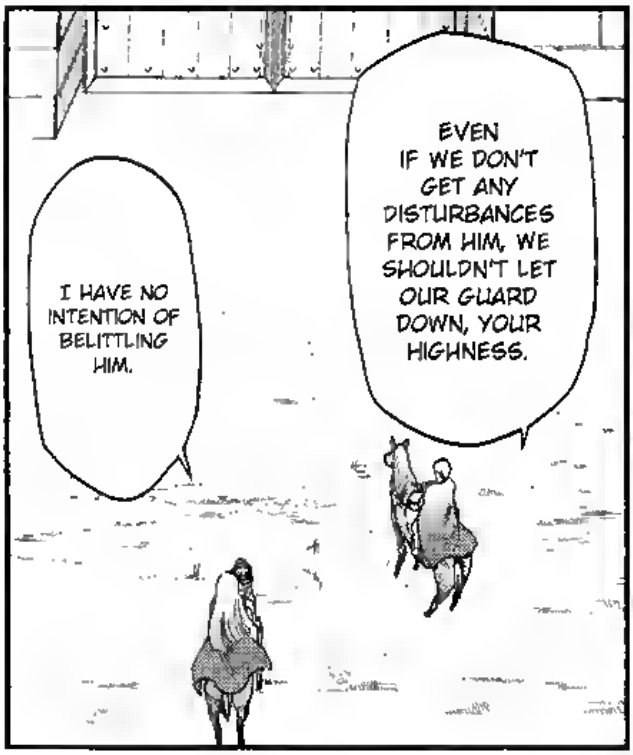
Two days later.



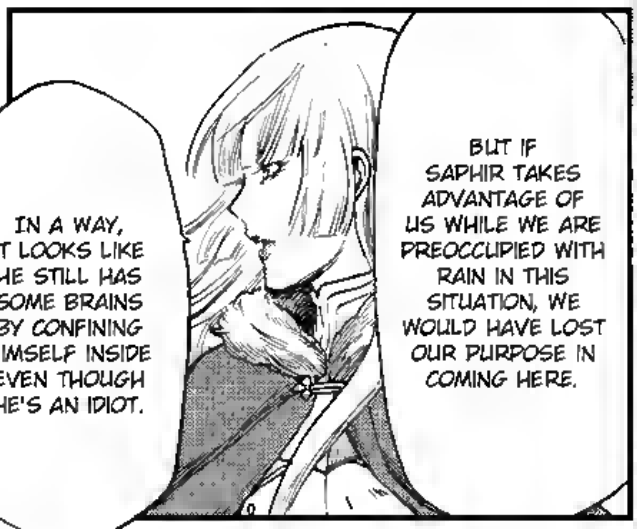
LOOKS LIKE THEY'VE NOTICED OUR INTENTION TO INVADE... FOR NOW.


Outside the walls of Lydia's castle within the royal capital city.

THIS SILENCE IS IRONICALLY, UNNERVING.
LADY FOL SAID THAT THAT SAPHIR DUDE IS AN IDIOT.
HE WAS PROBABLY PANICKING AS HE WAS PREPARING FOR THIS AND THE BEST HE COULD COME UP WITH WAS TO CLOSE THE DOOR ON US, HUH?


EVEN IF WE DON'T GET ANY DISTURBANCES FROM HIM, WE SHOULDN'T LET OUR GUARD DOWN, YOUR HIGHNESS.
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF BELITTLING HIM.

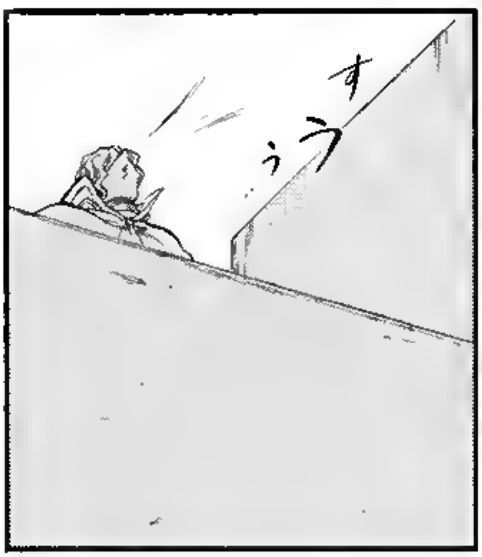
DESPITE SENDING ALL THOSE PROVOCATIVE REPLIES, RAIN DIDN'T EVEN DO ANYTHING.


BUT IF SAPHIR TAKES ADVANTAGE OF US WHILE WE ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH RAIN IN THIS SITUATION, WE WOULD HAVE LOST OUR PURPOSE IN COMING HERE.
IN A WAY, IT LOOKS LIKE HE STILL HAS SOME BRAINS BY CONFINING HIMSELF INSIDE EVEN THOUGH HE'S AN IDIOT.

ALL TROOPS, TAKE FORMATION!
I WANT THE ENGINEERS READY THEMSELVES TO SIEGE THE TOWER.
ROGER!
HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER CHOICES, DID HE?
THE MOST ANNOYING THING IS BREAKING DOWN THE CASTLE GATE.
SINCE I'M LIVING MY LIFE AS A HUMAN,
I SHOULD BE FIGHTING AS A HUMAN AS WELL, SHOULDN'T I?
I AM NOT GOING TO USE MY POWERS IN BATTLE.
WITH YOUR POWERS, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE WRENCH THE DOOR OPEN BY YOURSELF, SHOULDN'T YOU?
KING OF HEROES.

YEAH.

THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU.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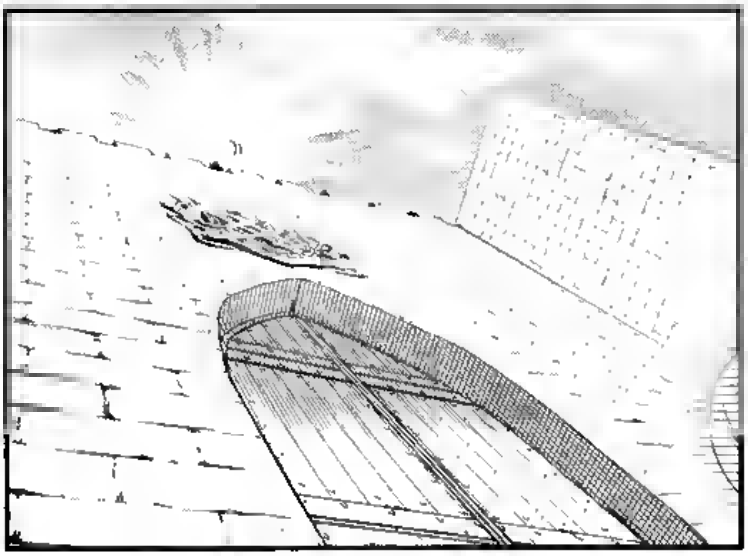
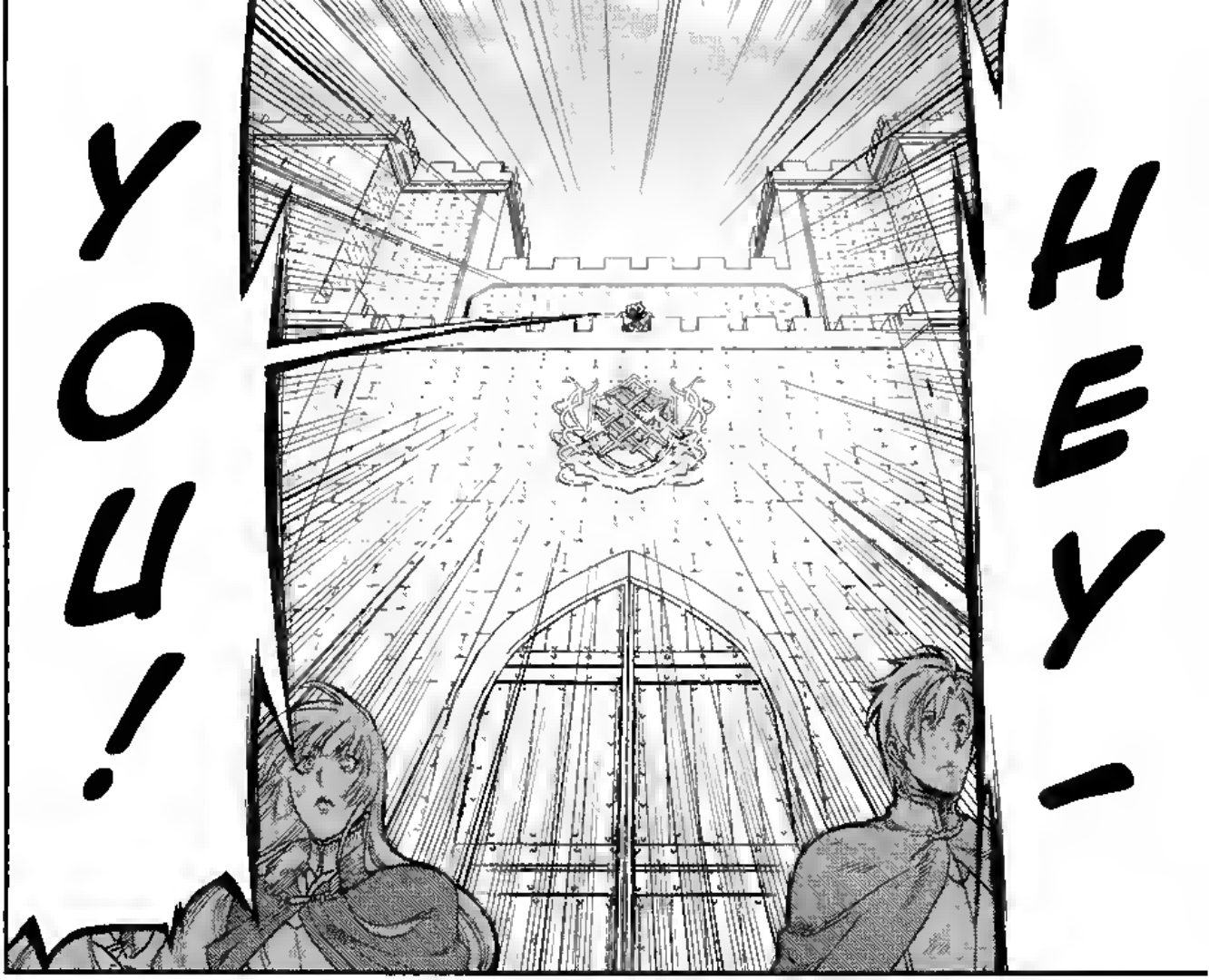
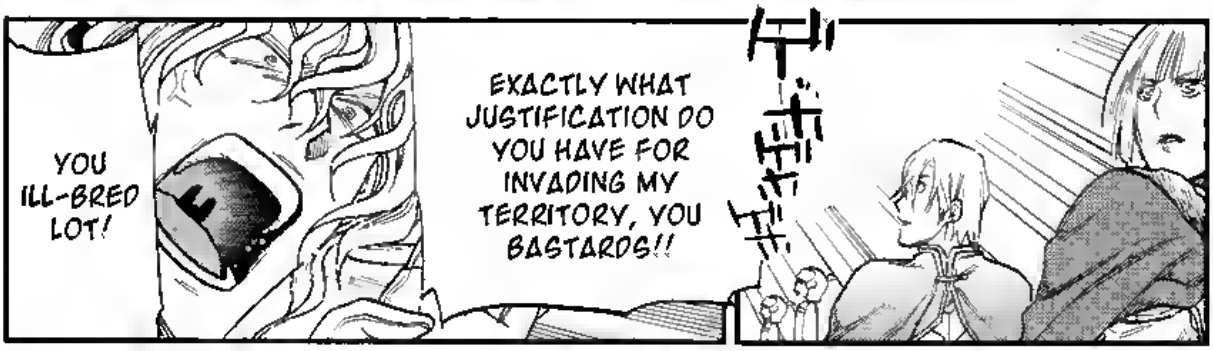
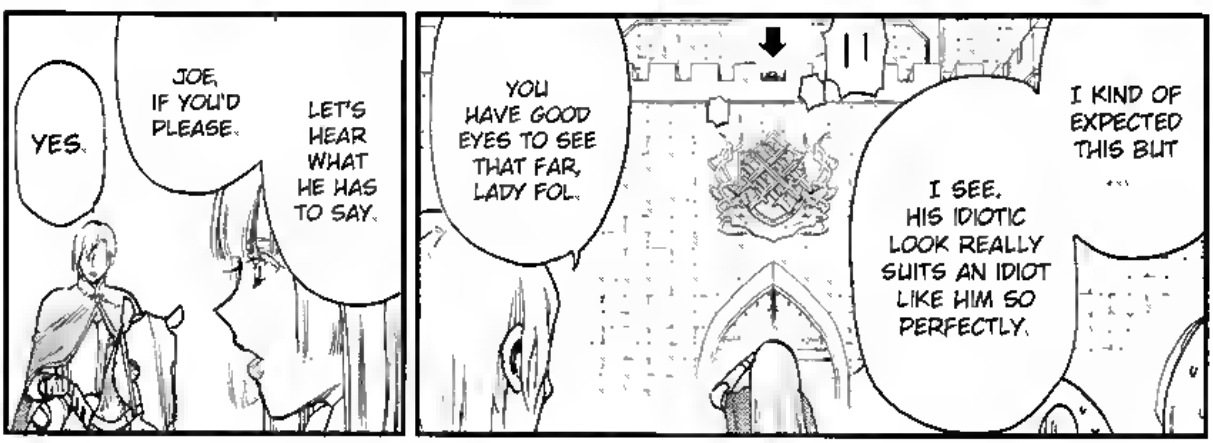
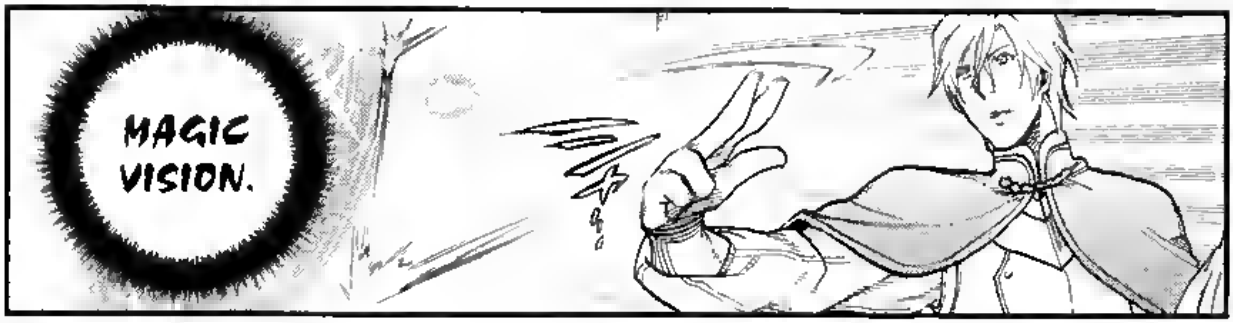
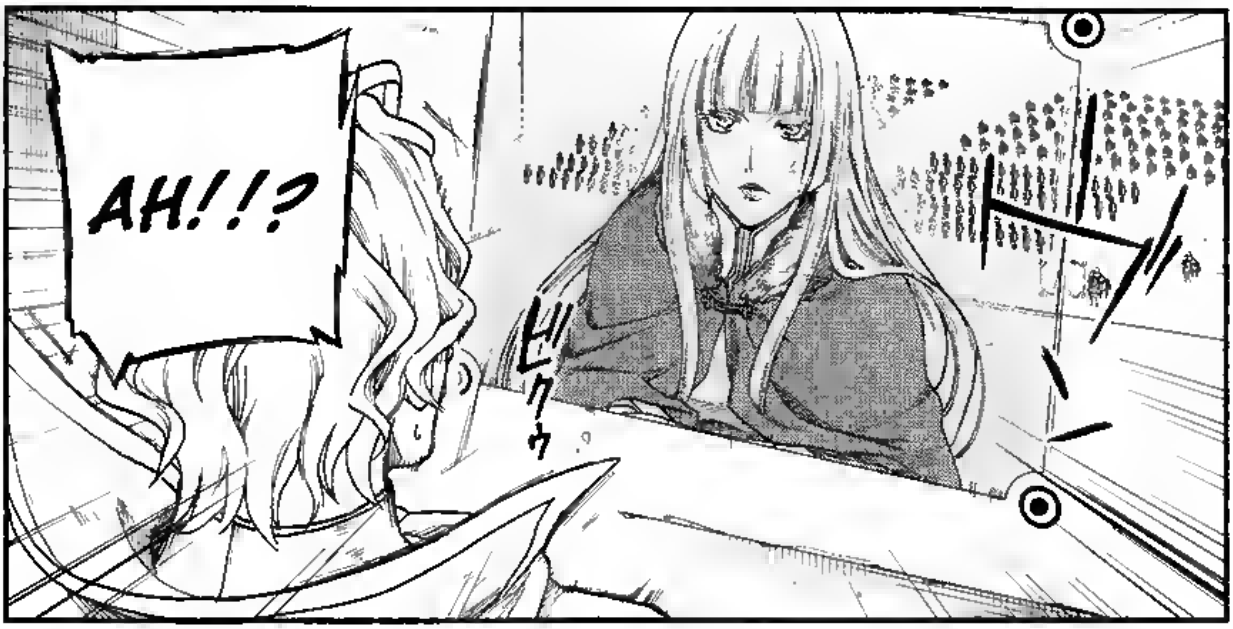


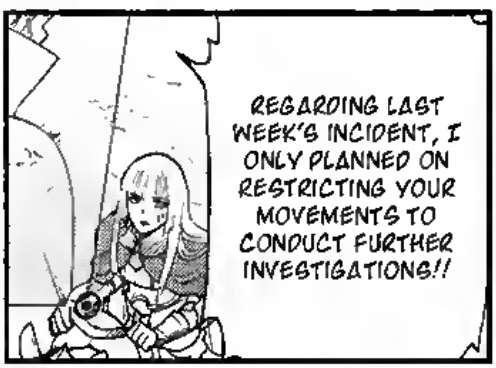

HEY-
YOU!

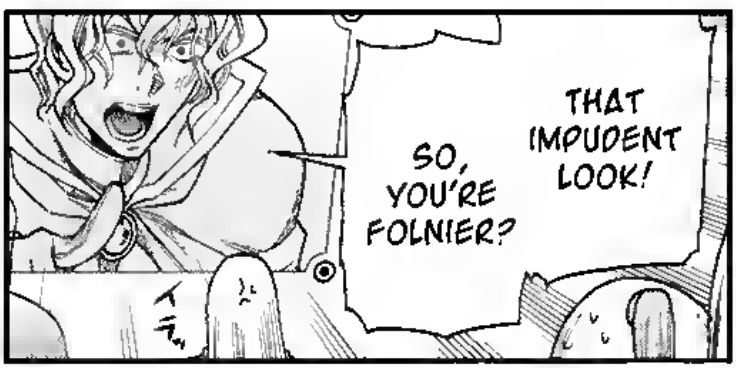

YOU ILL-BRED LOT!
EXACTLY WHAT JUSTIFICATION DO YOU HAVE FOR INVADING MY TERRITORY, YOU BASTARDS!!


YES.
JOE, IF YOU'D PLEASE.
LET'S HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY.
YOU HAVE GOOD EYES TO SEE THAT FAR, LADY FOL.
I SEE. HIS IDIOTIC LOOK REALLY SUITS AN IDIOT LIKE HIM SO PERFECTLY.
I KIND OF EXPECTED THIS BUT ...


MAGIC VISION.


AH!!?
ビクッ


REGARDING LAST WEEK'S INCIDENT, I ONLY PLANNED ON RESTRICTING YOUR MOVEMENTS TO CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS!!


THAT IMPUDENT LOOK!
SO, YOU'RE FOLNIER?
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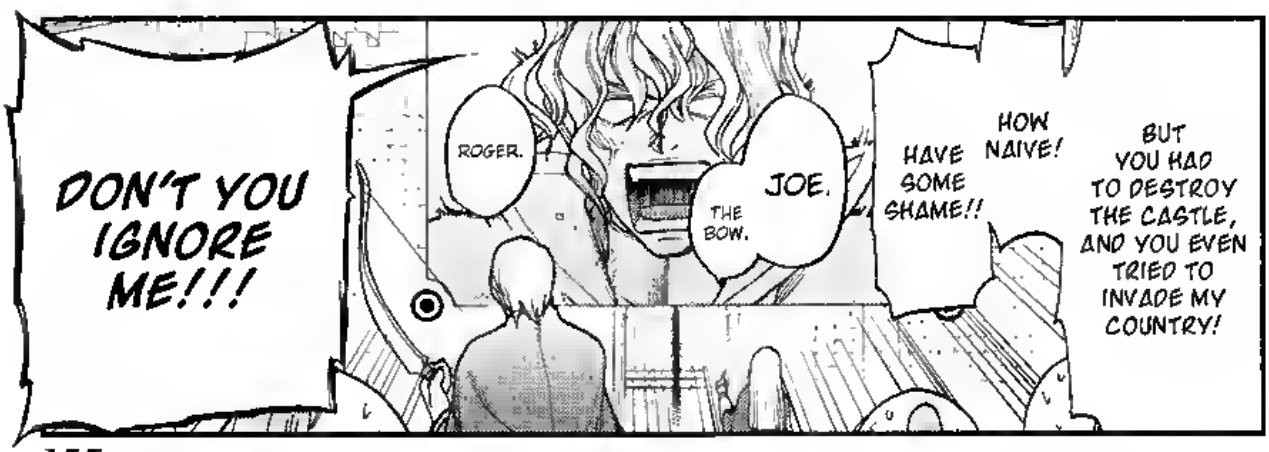
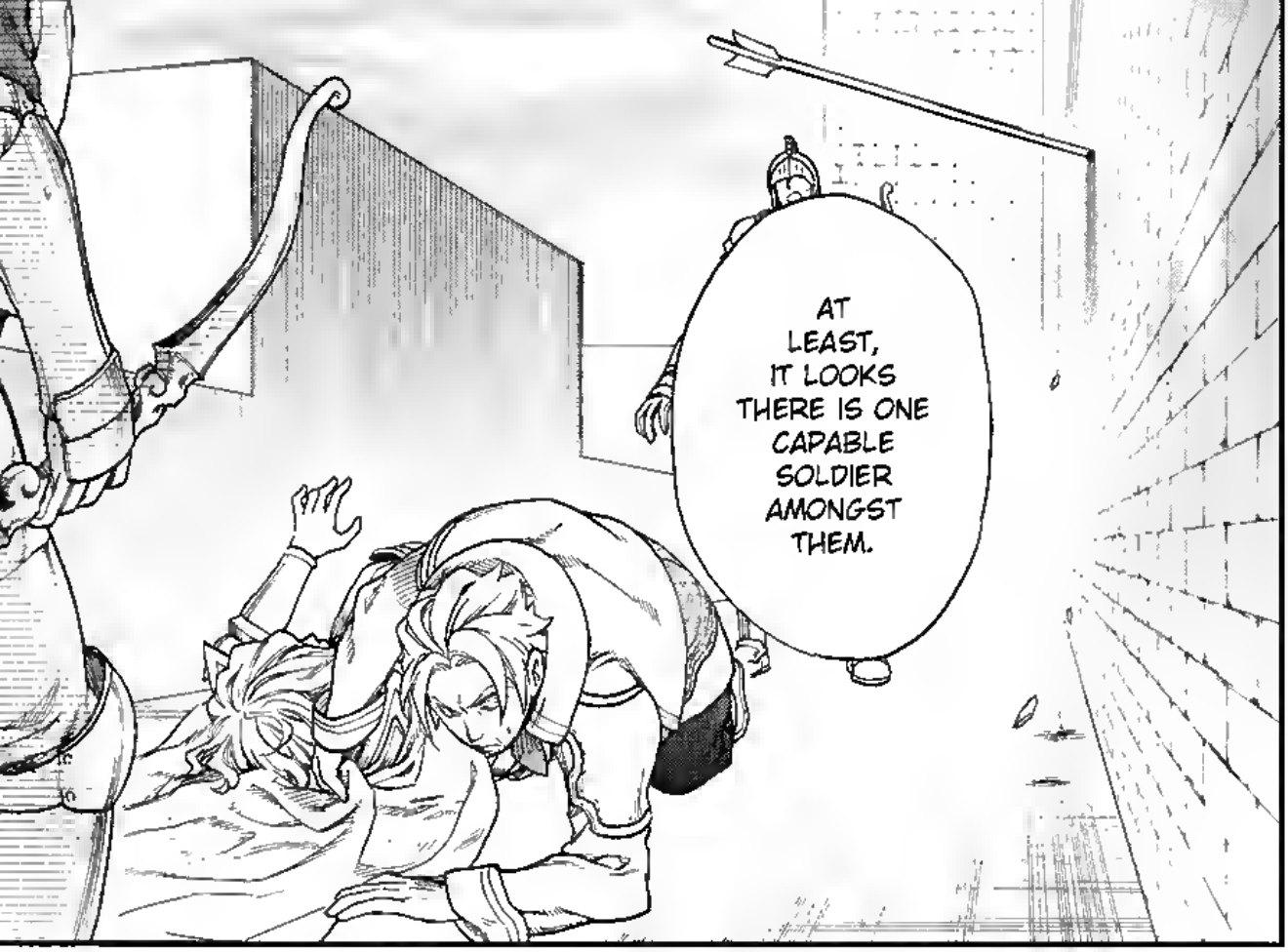

DON'T YOU IGNORE ME!!!
ROGER.
JOE.
THE BOW.
HOW NAIVE!
HAVE SOME SHAME!!
BUT YOU HAD TO DESTROY THE CASTLE, AND YOU EVEN TRIED TO INVADE MY COUNTRY!

FROM WHAT I KNOW, YOU'RE BUT AN IDIOTIC ARISTO-CRAT!
YOU BITCH! WHO DO YOU THINK I AM!
FOR THE SAKE OF SELF-INTEREST, YOU EVEN MADE ENEMIES OUT OF YOUR NEIGHBORING COUNTRY WHILE ALLOWING THE ENEMY TO INVADE ALL THE WAY INTO THE CAPITAL CITY, LYDIA!
IF YOU DON'T EVEN PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE, WHY DO YOU EVEN CALL YOURSELF A KING!!
EVEN AS YOUR NATION WAS BEING INVADED, YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE IT IN YOUR SILLINESS. DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!
WITHOUT COMPLETING THE CORONATION CEREMONY, YOU'RE JUST A TEMPORARY RULER, SO WHAT ARE YOU BARKING ABOUT!

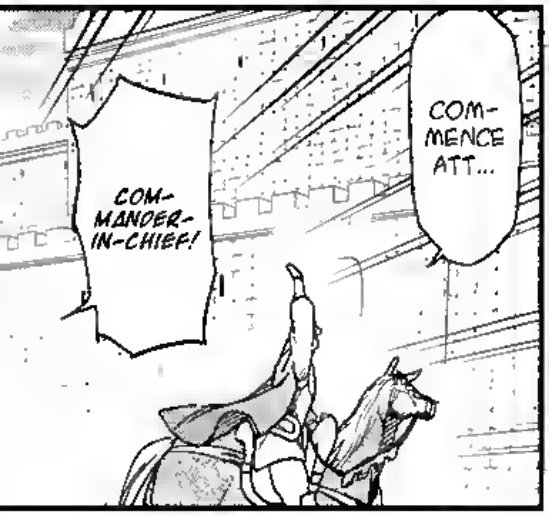
SHUT UP!
AS IF YOU CAN HIT ME WITH AN ARROW FROM THIS DISTANCE!!
WE WILL NOT ACKNOWLEDGE YOU AS THE RULER OF SUNKWOLL!!
YOUR MAJESTY !!!

EVEN THOUGH HE'S WEAK, IT LOOKS HE'S GOT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF LUCK.


AT LEAST, IT LOOKS THERE IS ONE CAPABLE SOLDIER AMONGST THEM.

YOU MUST NOT SHOW YOUR FACE!
YOUR MAJESTY!
N-NOW, RETALIATE!

Y-YOU SAVED ME, LUDICC.

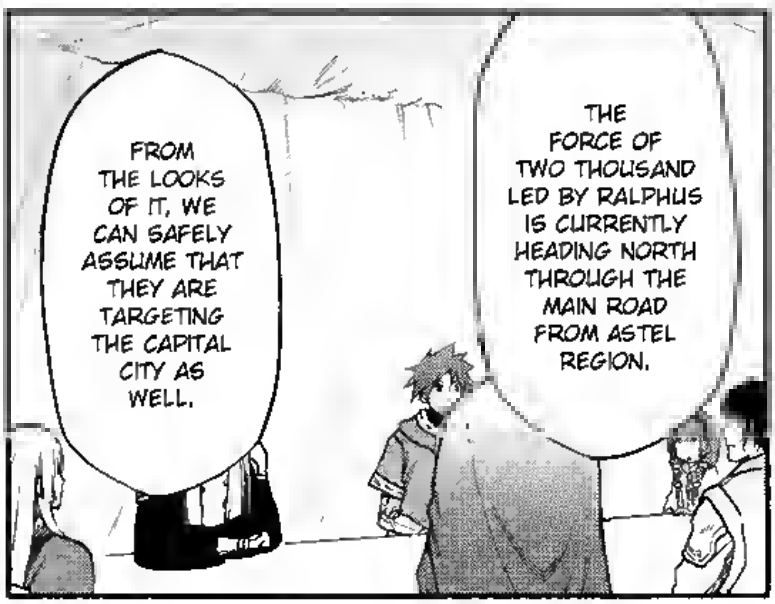

COM-MANDER-IN-CHIEF!
COM-MENCE ATT...

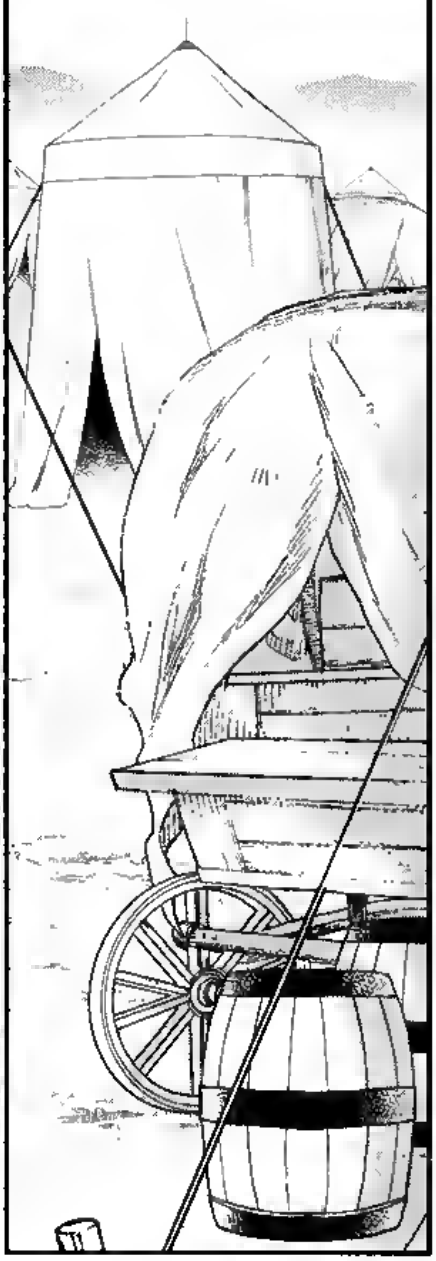
GRRR RR....
WE CAN'T FIGHT THEM FAIR AND SQUARE WITHOUT ANY PREPARA-TIONS!
KEEP IT THIS WAY AND RETREAT TO THE CASTLE GROUND.

WHAT ...
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S A NEED FOR A WAR COUNCIL.
LET'S RETREAT... FOR NOW.
WHAT'S WRONG?
THEY'RE RETREATING ...
WHAT?

In front of Lydia's castle walls, Syanderis' encampment.

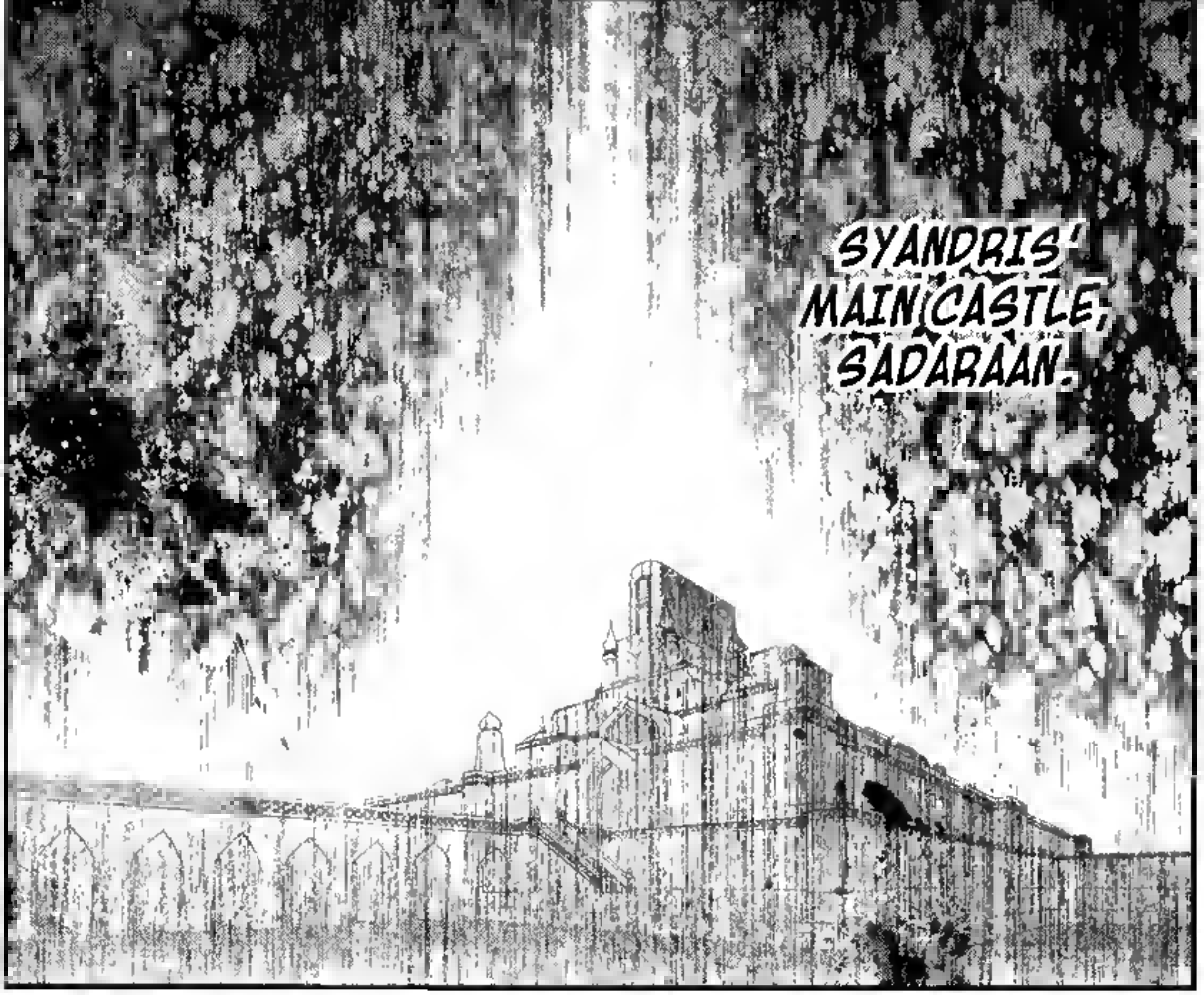
THEY WERE SEEN FROM AFAR SO WE CAN'T CONFIRM ANYTHING. WHAT'S MORE, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT JUST BE DUMMY SOLDIERS.
I HEARD THAT THEY CARRIED A FLAG WITH A LION CREST ON IT.


THE FORCE OF TWO THOUSAND LED BY RALPHUS IS CURRENTLY HEADING NORTH THROUGH THE MAIN ROAD FROM ASTEL REGION.
FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, WE CAN SAFELY ASSUME THAT THEY ARE TARGETING THE CAPITAL CITY AS WELL.



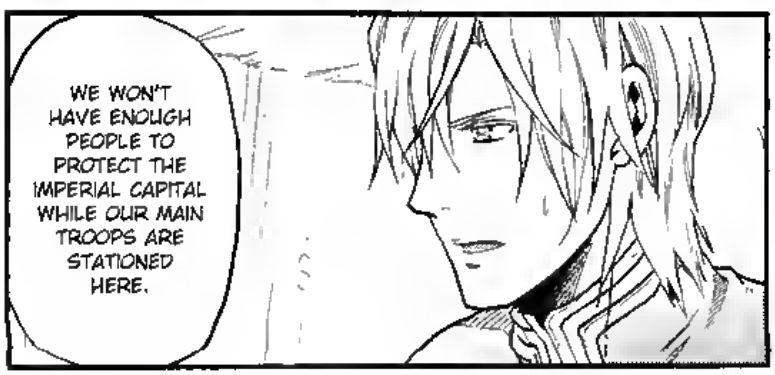
DON'T TELL ME THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF THE SIZE OF OUR FORCE ...
THEY'RE NOT.
BE IT THE SIGNBOARD OR THE LETTER, HE'S JUST SOMEONE WHO PREDICTED OUR MOVEMENTS AND MADE FUN OF US, RIGHT?
I THOUGHT THE PRINCESS SHOULD HAVE AT LEAST SIX THOUSAND...
TWO THOUSAND... THAT'S PRETTY SMALL.
THEN WHY... WERE THEY NOT DESPERATE AT ALL?
THEY MIGHT EVEN KNOW THAT WE HAVE LESS THAN A HUNDRED UNITS.
AH.
THEY'RE DIFFERENT FROM SAPHIR. THEIR INTELLIGENCE GROUP IS FAR SUPERIOR.
WITH THAT IN CONSID-ERATION, MY BEST GUESS WOULD BE THAT...
YES.
WE ARE STILL UNSURE ABOUT RAIN'S MOVE-MENTS.
JOE, THE SPY ONLY CONFIRMED RALPHUS' TROOPS, RIGHT?

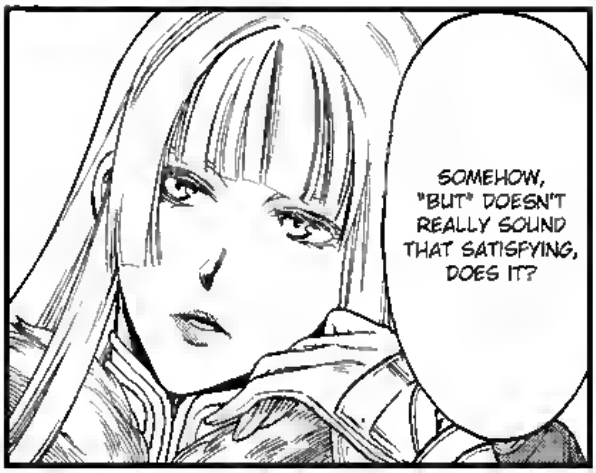
RALPHUS IS THE DECOY.
IF HE NEVER WANTED TO FIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, HE WOULD HAVE CONCEDED HIS LACK OF TROOPS.
HE INTENTIONALLY DIVIDED HIS TROOPS TO DIVERT OUR ATTENTION, SO THAT HE COULD BUY MORE TIME.
AND THE ONE WHO WILL LEAD THE MAIN TROOPS IS RAIN.
IF HIS INTENTION WERE TO ADVANCE WITHOUT US KNOWING...
I DARESAY THAT HIS OBJECTIVE WOULD BE ...
!
IMPOS-SIBLE...


SYANDRIS' MAIN CASTLE, SADARAAN.

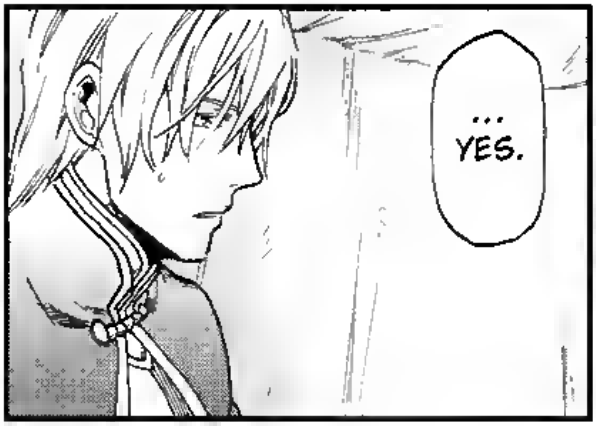
WHILE WE'RE DOING THIS, RAIN AND THE OTHERS ARE NOW ...
IF THIS SPREADS, OUR TROOPS WOULD GRADUALLY LOSE THEIR WILL TO FIGHT!
WHAT A HEART-LESS THING TO DO...

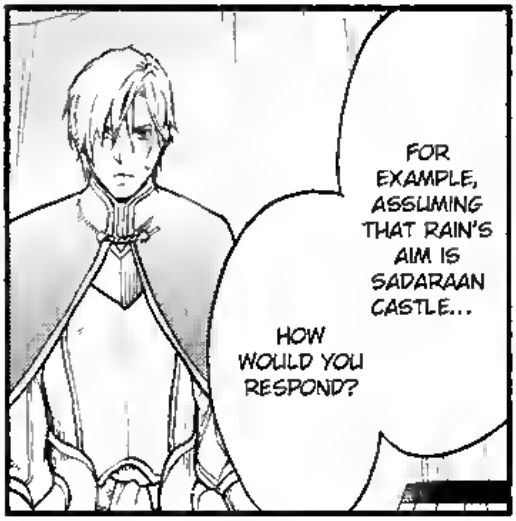
THAT SNEAKY THIEF!!

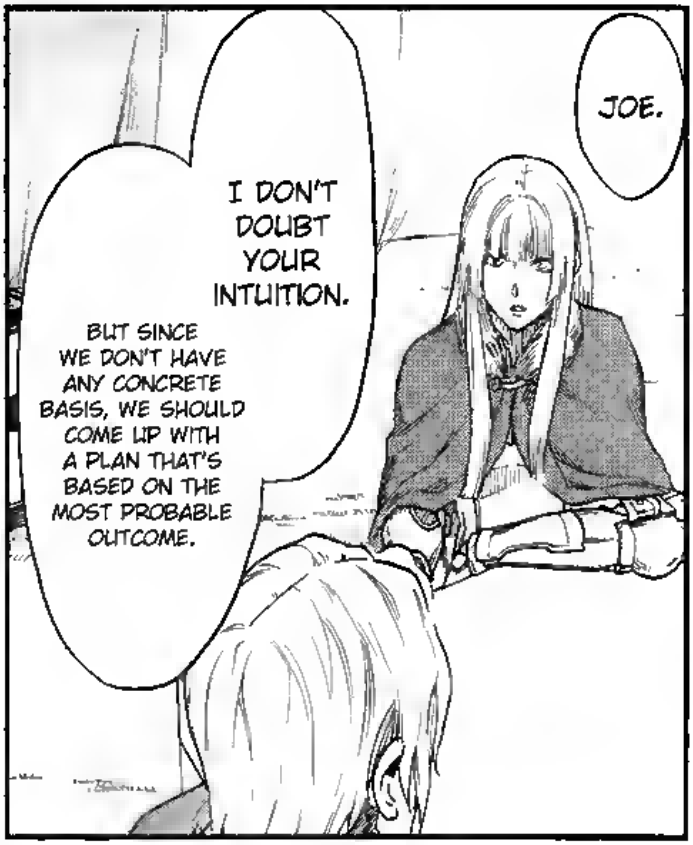

WE WON'T HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO PROTECT THE IMPERIAL CAPITAL WHILE OUR MAIN TROOPS ARE STATIONED HERE.

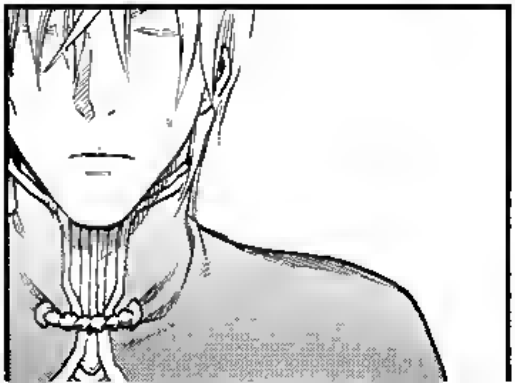

SOMEHOW, "BUT" DOESN'T REALLY SOUND THAT SATISFYING, DOES IT?

FROM THE LOOKS OF IT, THIS IS THE MOST AGREEABLE ESTIMATION I CAN COME UP WITH, BUT...

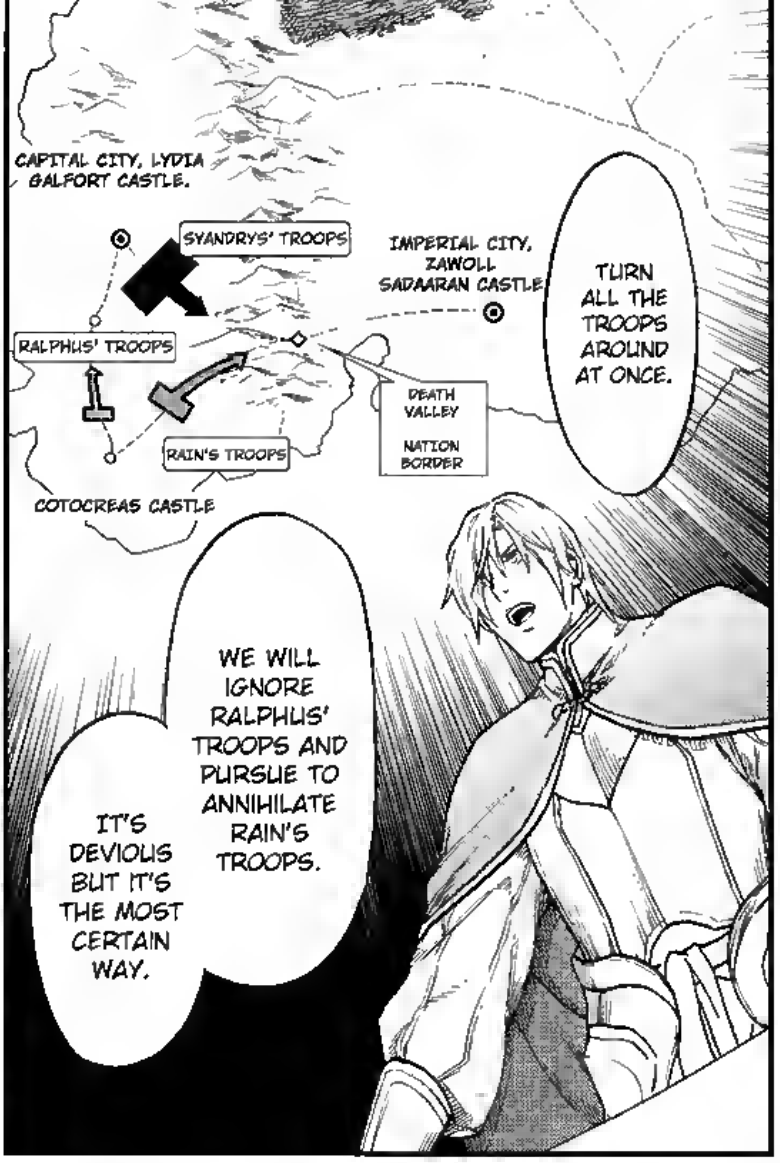

... YES.


FOR EXAMPLE, ASSUMING THAT RAIN'S AIM IS SADARAAN CASTLE...
HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?


JOE.
I DON'T DOUBT YOUR INTUITION.
BUT SINCE WE DON'T HAVE ANY CONCRETE BASIS, WE SHOULD COME UP WITH A PLAN THAT'S BASED ON THE MOST PROBABLE OUTCOME.



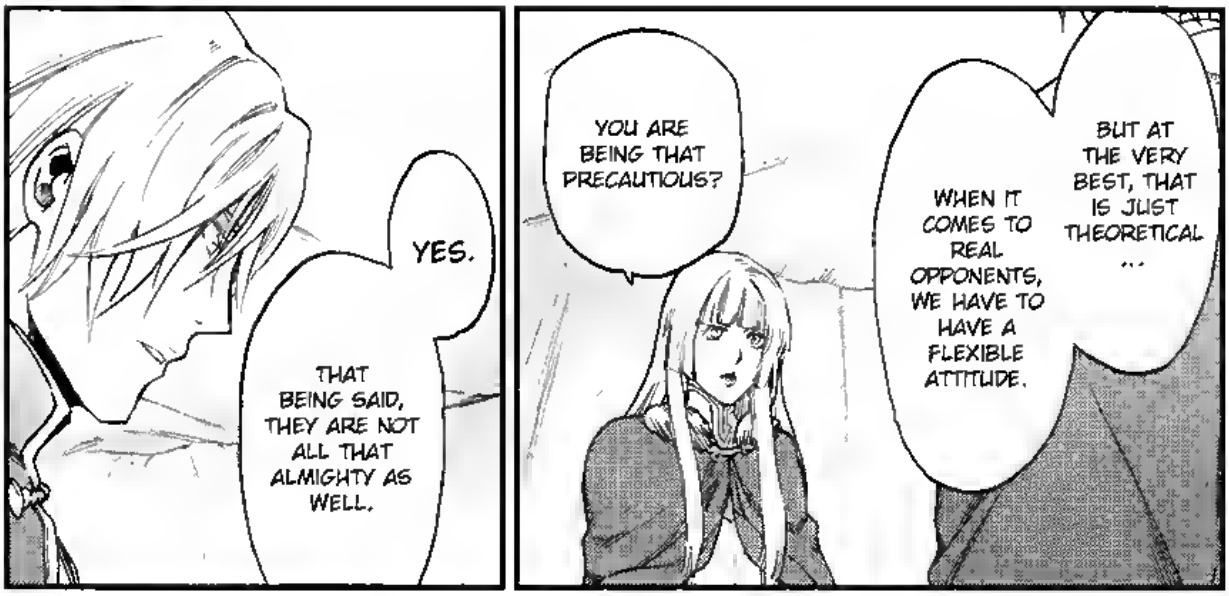
THAT'S ...


CAPITAL CITY, LYDIA
GALFORT CASTLE.
SYANDRYS' TROOPS
IMPERIAL CITY, ZAWOLL
SADAARAN CASTLE
RALPHUS' TROOPS
DEATH VALLEY
NATION BORDER
RAIN'S TROOPS
COTOCREAS CASTLE
TURN ALL THE TROOPS AROUND AT ONCE.
WE WILL IGNORE RALPHUS' TROOPS AND PURSUE TO ANNIHILATE RAIN'S TROOPS.
IT'S DEVIOUS BUT IT'S THE MOST CERTAIN WAY.

AREN'T YOU BEING TOO PESSIMISTIC?
OUR TROOPS ARE NOT ONLY A FEW TIMES STRONGER THAN THEIRS; WE ARE SEVERAL TIMES MUCH STRONGER!!

I'M REALLY GLAD THAT YOU REMEMBER.
INDEED, I DID MENTION THAT.

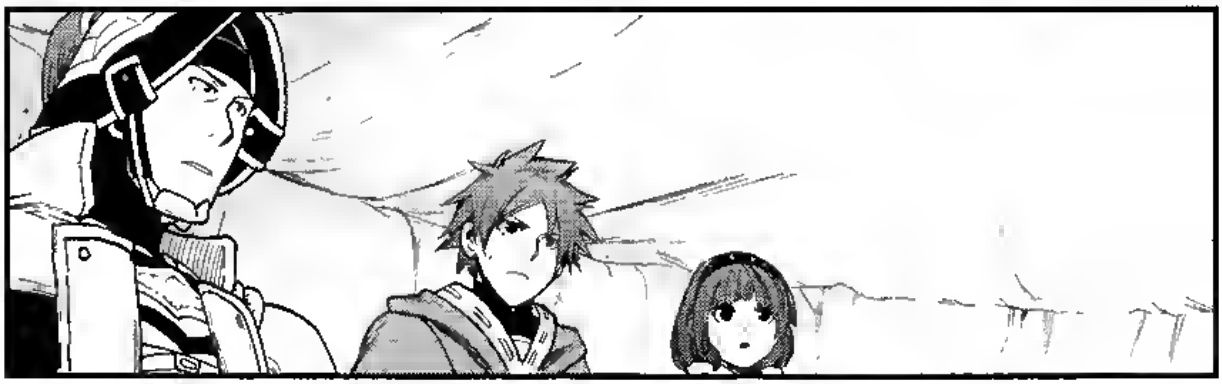
"IF THE STRENGTH OF OUR TROOPS OUTDO THE ENEMY BY MULTIPLE TIMES, THE BEST PLAN WOULD BE DARING TO DIVIDE THE TROOPS INTO HALF."
WASN'T THAT WHAT YOU TAUGHT ME DURING YOUR LECTURE ON MILITARY STRATEGY WHEN I WAS JUST A KID?

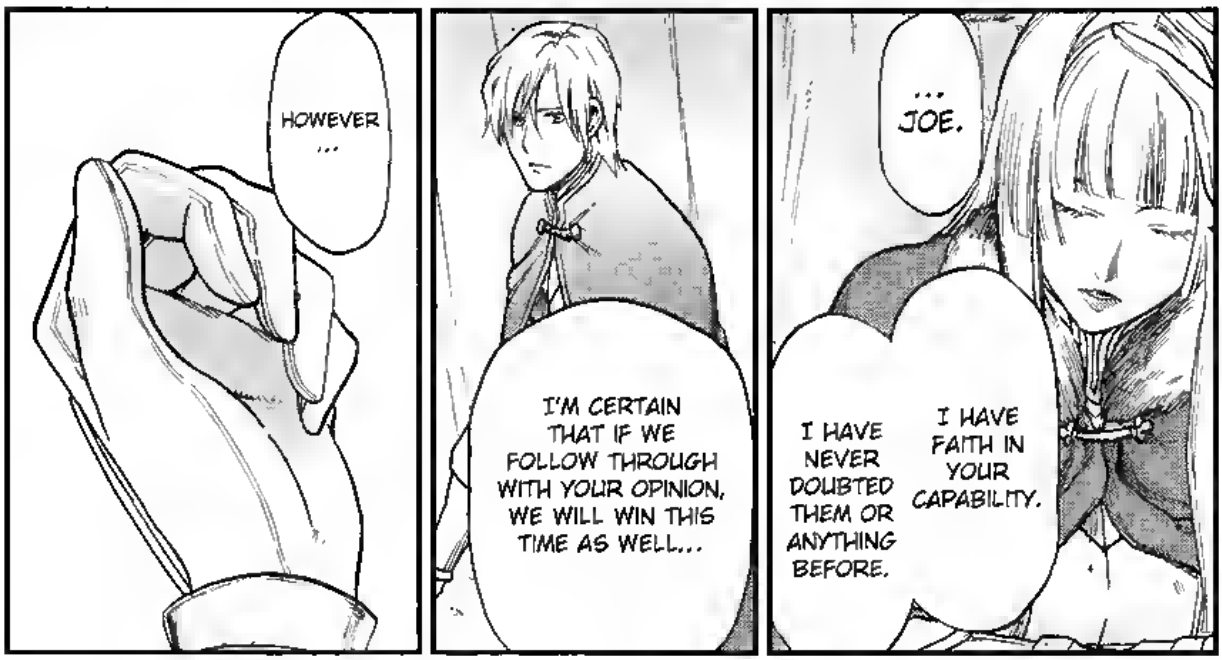

YES.
THAT BEING SAID, THEY ARE NOT ALL THAT ALMIGHTY AS WELL.
YOU ARE BEING THAT PRECAUTIOUS?
WHEN IT COMES TO REAL OPPONENTS, WE HAVE TO HAVE A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE.
BUT AT THE VERY BEST, THAT IS JUST THEORETICAL ...

BECAUSE OF THAT, DURING THE BATTLE WITH ZARMIN AT THE OLD LUNAN, THEY WERE FORCED TO RELY ON CLEVER TACTICS BY EXPLOITING THE TERRAIN.
THEIR BIGGEST WEAKNESS IS THEIR LACK OF TROOPS.

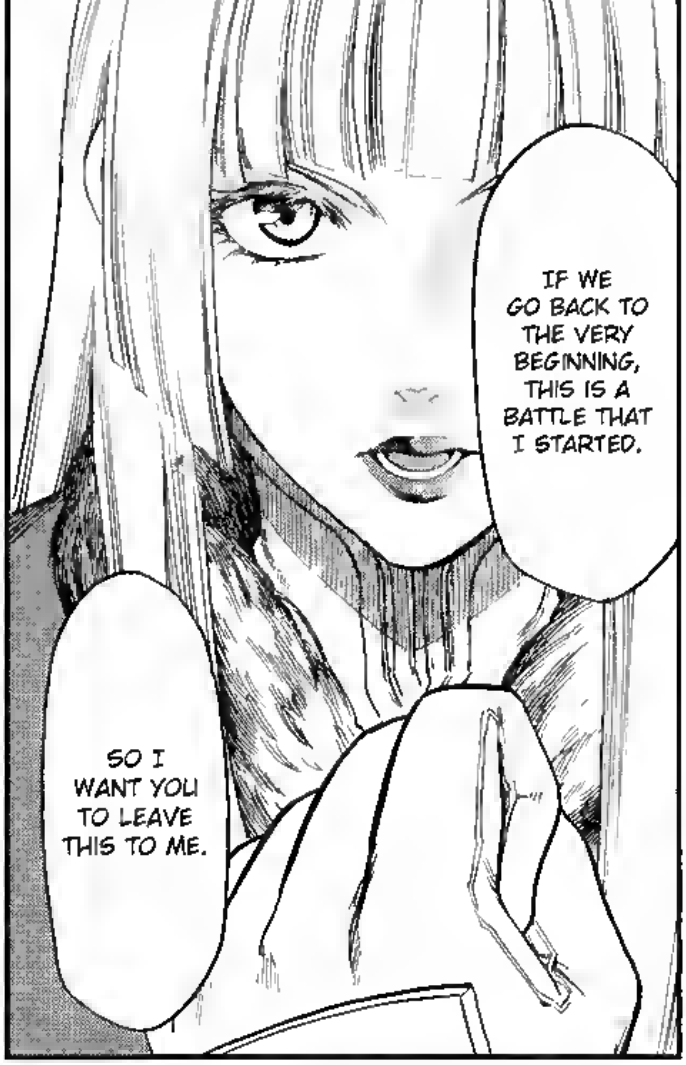
IN MY OPINION, WE SHOULD CRUSH THEM WITH FULL FORCE BEFORE THEY CAN APPROACH THE "DEATH VALLEY" NEAR THE COUNTRY BORDER.
WE WON'T BE GIVING THEM ANY ADVANTAGES.
THAT'S WHY IN AN ENVIRONMENT LIKE THIS WHERE HE WON'T BE ABLE TO USE ANY TRICKS, AS LONG AS WE OPERATE BY CONCENTRATING OUR FORCES LIKE THIS...

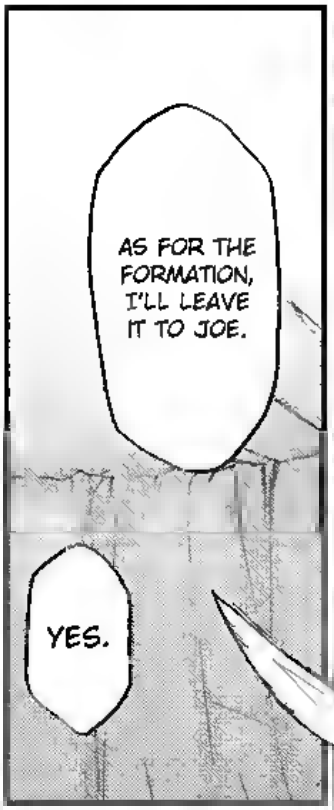
TO MY DECISION.
WOULD THERE BE ANY OBJECTION?




HOWEVER ...
I'M CERTAIN THAT IF WE FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR OPINION, WE WILL WIN THIS TIME AS WELL...
... JOE.
I HAVE NEVER DOUBTED THEM OR ANYTHING BEFORE.
I HAVE FAITH IN YOUR CAPABILITY.

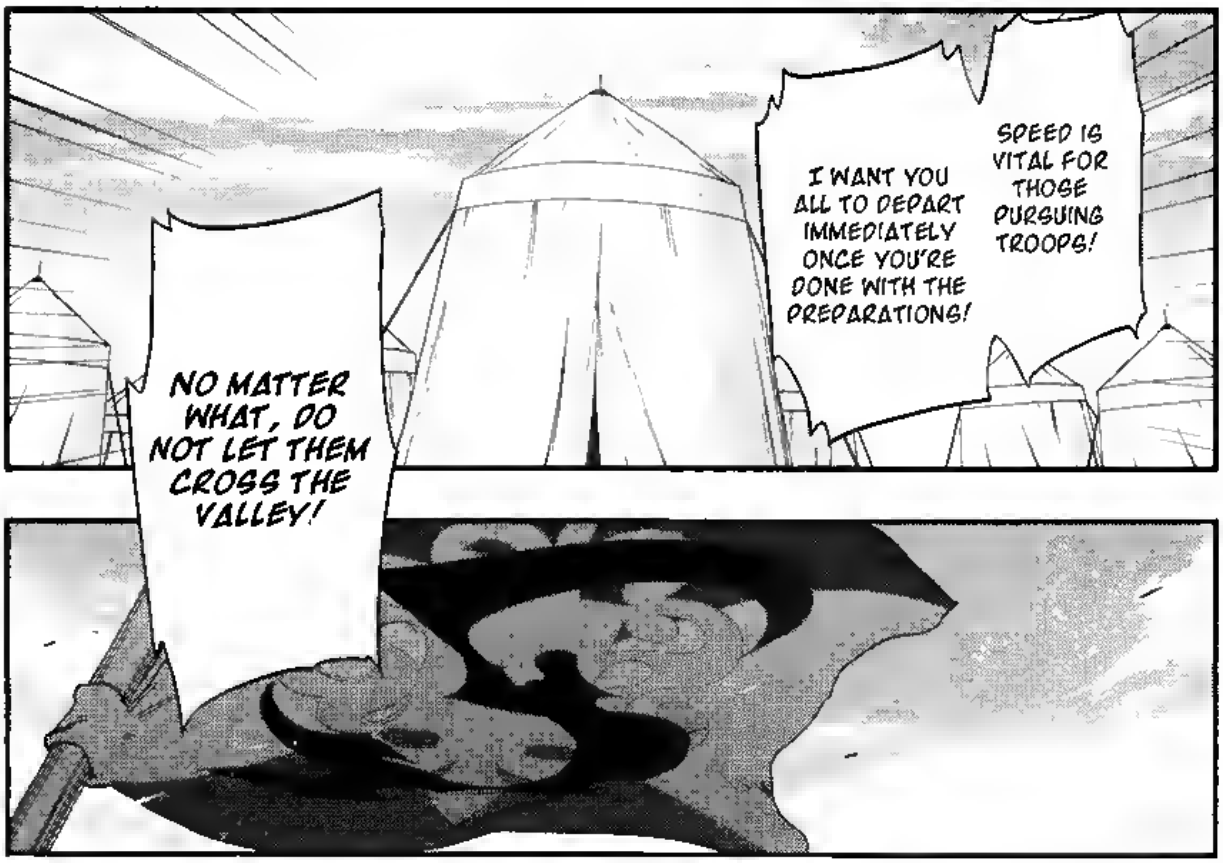
AS YOU WISH...

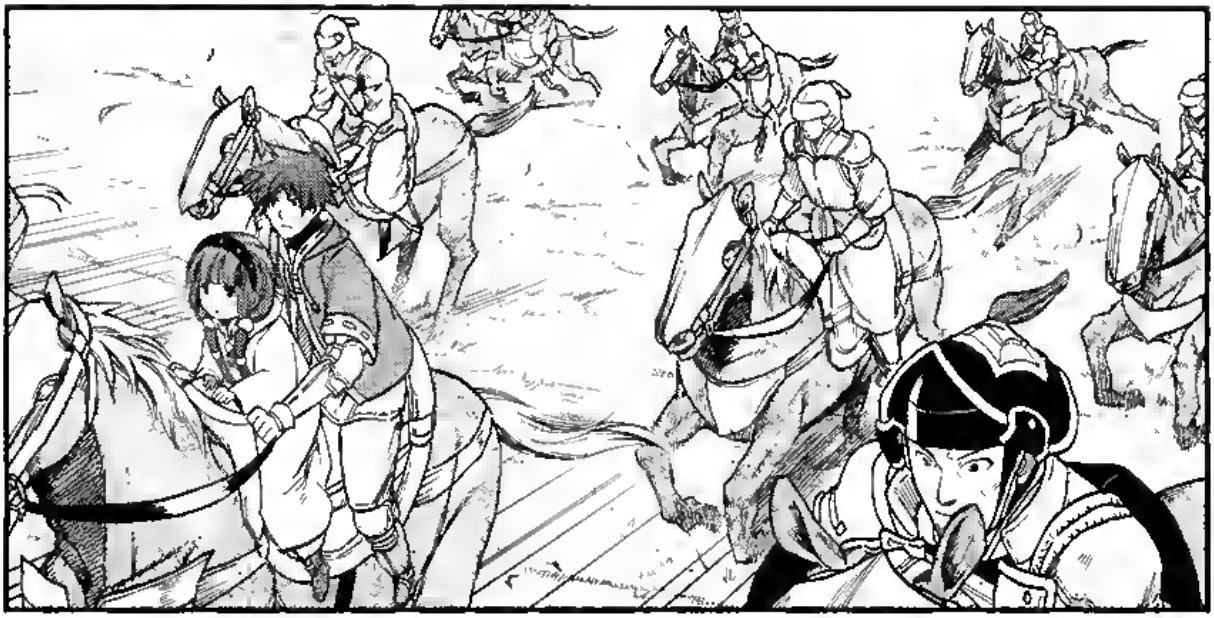

IF WE GO BACK TO THE VERY BEGINNING, THIS IS A BATTLE THAT I STARTED.
SO I WANT YOU TO LEAVE THIS TO ME.

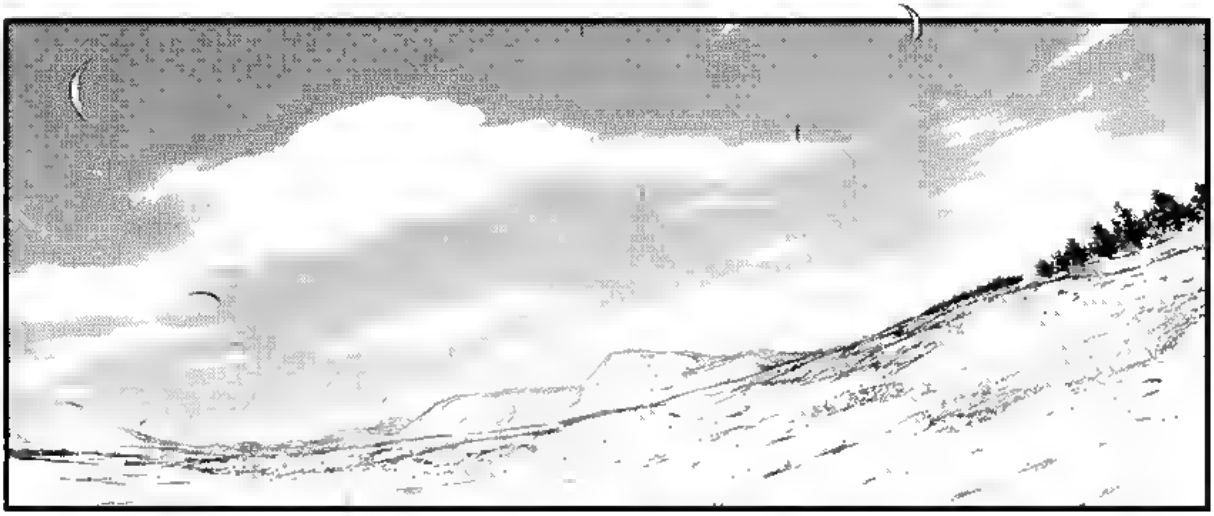

AS FOR THE FORMATION, I'LL LEAVE IT TO JOE.
YES.

I WANT THE TROOPS SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS. ONE WILL REMAIN HERE TO INTERCEPT RALPHUS' TROOPS WHILE RESTRAINING SAPHIR!
THE OTHER ONE WILL COMPRISE OF CAVALRIES WHO WILL HEAD TOWARDS THE VALLEY AT FULL SPEED TO SEIZE RAIN.
NOW!
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO BEAT UP THAT STUPID ARISTOCRAT'S FACE LATER.

ZARTS AND I WILL REMAIN HERE AND AMBUSH RALPHUS' TROOPS.
UH, SO WE'RE CARETAKING ...
SHING, SEYL AND JUNNA'S TROOPS WILL GO AFTER RAIN!
YES, SIR!


I WANT YOU ALL TO DEPART IMMEDIATELY ONCE YOU'RE DONE WITH THE PREPARATIONS!
SPEED IS VITAL FOR THOSE PURSUING TROOPS!
NO MATTER WHAT, DO NOT LET THEM CROSS THE VALLEY!





TO THE
DEATH
VALLEY!
レイン 4

ザーマイン -Zarmine-

レイグル
大国ザーマインを統べる王。

ザーマイン軍
本国で
軍備増強中

Sunkwoll

サンクワール王都
リディア
Lydia

サフィール・貴族連合軍
対
シャンドリス軍

Dry Camp Valley

Starhill

ラルファス軍
王都目指して進軍中

N

Cotcreas

レイン軍
ラルファス軍を囲に
シャンドリス首都
ザワールへ侵攻中！

Syandrys

シャンドリス首都
ザワール
Zawar

borden fs

サフィール・貴族連合軍

サフィール
サンクワール上将軍の一人。ザーマイン戦後行方不明となり、先王の遺言書を持って帰還、王位を主張。

ルディック
サフィールの招聘を受けて着任。貴族には珍しく、戦術眼を持った指揮官。国政に危機感を一番持っている。

サフィールに対して、宣戦布告！

内乱中！サンクワール -Sunkwoll-

勝手はさせない！

そっちがその気なら！

レイン・ラルファス連合軍

ラルファス
サンクワール上将軍。建国祖の五家の一角。

グエン
ラルファスの副官。山賊のような容姿の巨漢。

ナイゼル
ラルファスの副官。物静かな騎士。

エレナ
名門貴族当主代行の高飛車少女。ラルファスへ一方的に好意を寄せている。

レイン
平民出のサンクワール上将軍で主人公。本人曰く「世界最強の男」らしい。

シェルファ
サンクワールの実質的次期君主。レインに好意を寄せる絶世の美少女。

ガサラム
かつて名を上げた騎士。過去にレインと関わりがあるらしいのだが…。

レ ニ
レインの副官で千人隊長。臆病な性格だが剣は確か。

セノア
レインの副官で千人隊長。レインの行動によく激怒を起こしている。

ギュンター
主に諜報や工作を担当する。レインの貴族の臣。常に苦い顔をしている。

セルフィー
見習い騎士の貧乏娘。レインの覇気を感じられる才能を持つ。ユーリと仲良し。

ユーリ
ザーマインの元間諜。厳しい給金交渉の末、レインの仲間になる。天真爛漫な元気っ娘。

ミラン
忠実な騎士見習いで、陰の苦労人。実は所々で登場して活躍している。

フォルニーア
シャンドリスの皇帝。

ジョウ
シャンドリスの大将軍。

シング
フォルニーアの臣下で、古参の将軍。

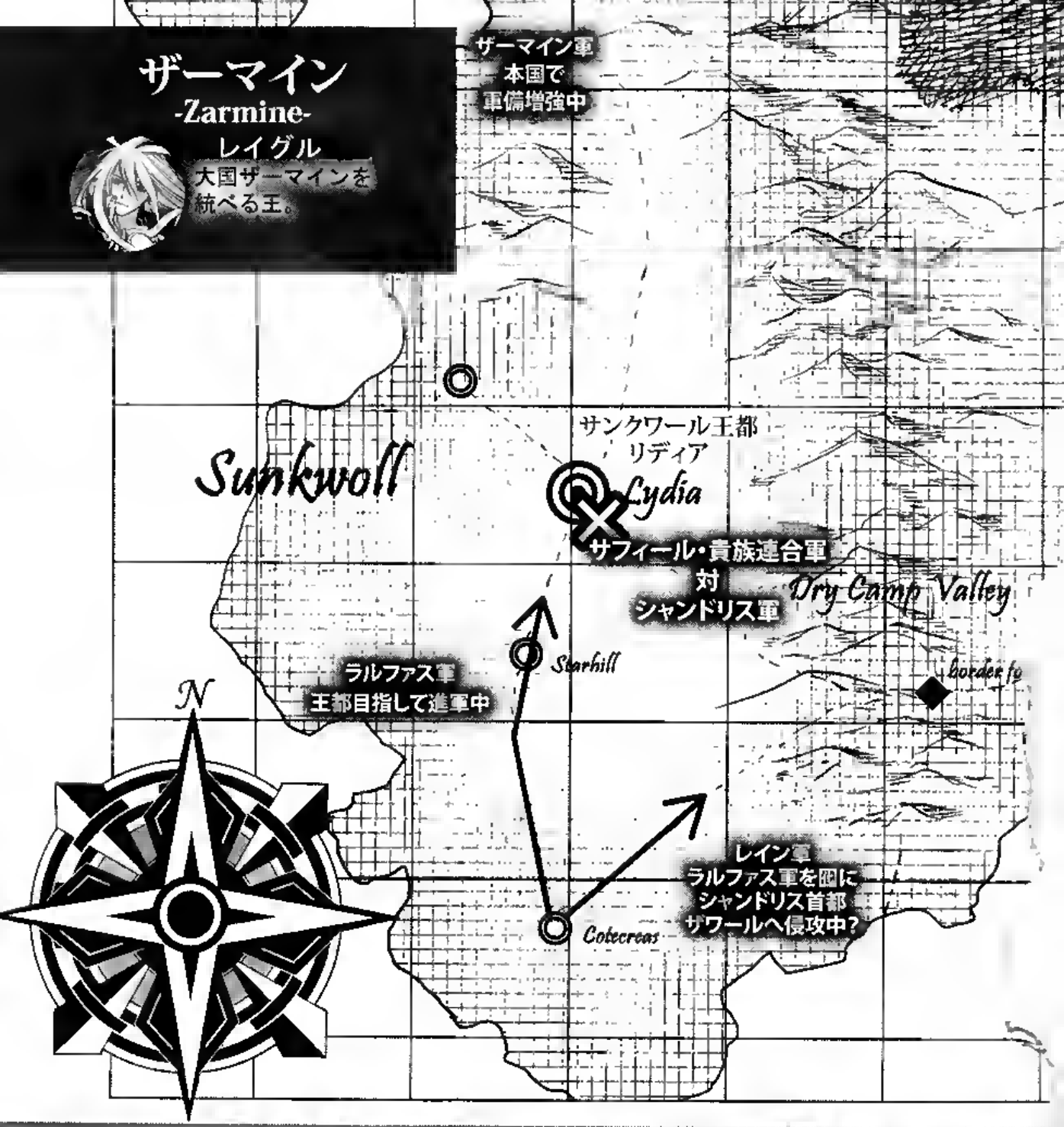
セイル
現やかな見掛けの若き将軍で騎士剣技や魔法を巧みに使いこなす。

ジュンナ
セイルの義妹。「天才魔法使い」と称されるが、滅多に力は見せない。

ザルツ
シャンドリスの将軍。ジュンナに滅法弱い。

シャンドリス -Syandrys-

The Characters ミュールゲニアの人々 of Murgenia



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ギュンター
主に諜報や工作を担当する、レインの股肱の臣。常に苦い顔をしている。

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見習い騎士の貧乏娘。レインの覇気を感じられる才能を持つ。ユーリと仲良し。

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忠実な騎士見習いで、陰の苦労人。実は所々で登場して活躍している。

Announcement

Sense Scans
www.sensescans.com
#Sense@irc.irchighway.net

We've been forced to move to a new domain because of complications. We're now at:

SENSESCANS.COM

Please note the lack of a hypen in our new URL.

JOE

A TALE OF A BADASS

FEATURING FOLNIER SYANDRYS

GUEST STARRING RALPHUS

ALSO FEATURING PRINCESS SHELLA

WITH NO MENTION OF THAT "RAIN" GUY

Sense Scans

www.sensescans.com

#Sense@irc.irchighway.net

Raws : Sense-Scans

Translator : zkein

Proofreader : Fromage

Cleaner : li_er & Minty

Typesetter : li_er

Quality Checker : Revan

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TRANSLATORS & QUALITY CHECKERS

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